



THE ACADEMY

WITH WHICH ARE INCORPORATED LITERATURE AND THE ENGLISH REVIEW

Edited by LORD ALFRED BRUCE DOUGLAS

No. 1938

JUNE 26, 1909

PRICE THREEPENCE

"SCORPIO." By J. A. CHALONER

"He prides himself on the fact that he is a hard and terrible bitter. Indeed, he assures us that he has come to the conclusion that you can put a wicked man 'to sleep' with a sonnet in pretty much the same way that a prize-fighter puts his opponent to sleep with a finished blow. And not only does Mr. Chaloner believe in what we may term the sonnetorial fist, but he believes also in whips and scorpions, for the cover of his book is decorated with an angry-looking seven-thonged scourge, and he dubs the whole effort 'Scorpio.' So that when we look to the fair page itself we know what to expect. Nor are we disappointed. Mr. Chaloner goes to the opera. Being a good poet, he immediately writes a sonnet about it, the which, however, he calls 'The Devil's Horseshoe.' We reproduce it for the benefit of all whom it may concern:—

A fecund sight for a philosopher—
Rich as Golconda's mine in lessons rare—
That gem-bedizen'd "horse-shoe" at th' Opera,
Replete with costly bags and matrons fair!
His votresses doth Mammon there array,
His Amazonian Phalanx dread to face!

Figuratively speaking, we (Palmetto Press) might add that Mr. Chaloner steps forward as the champion of Shakespeare's memory, and lands, with the force of a John L. Sullivan, upon the point of the jaw of Mr. G. B. SHAW, owing to the latter's impertinent comments upon Shakespeare.

(Delivered, post-paid on receipt of two dollars, by registered mail, to PALMETTO PRESS, Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, U.S.A.)

To Mammon there do they their homage pay;
Spangl'd with jewels, satins, silks and lace,
Crones whose old bosoms in their corsets creak;
Beldames whose slightest glance would fright a horse;
Ghouls—when they speak one hears the grave-mole squeak—
Their escorts *parvenus* of feature coarse.
A rich array of Luxury and Vice!
But, spite of them, the music's very nice."

"Here you have whips, scorpions, and a knock-out blow with a vengeance. The sonnet as a whole is not one which we can approve from a technical or a sentimental point of view, but it has points. Henley might have plumed himself on that line about the creaking corsets, and the last line, a *tour de force*, in its way reminds us of the withering ironies of Byron. It is only fair to Mr. Chaloner to add that not all his sonnets are concerned with back-biting. . . . Some of them show the tenderer emotions proper to a poet. We like him best, however, in his character as metrical bruiser. . . . His book is well worth possessing."—*The Academy*, August 8th, 1908.

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LIFE AND LETTERS

ALTHOUGH as a rule we do not print the "puffs" which the publishers continually send to us under the heading of "literary intelligence," we feel that we must make an exception in the case of the following beautiful piece of writing which "emanates" from "the great house of Murray":

"The Earl of Rosebury (*sic*) has written an interesting preface to the 'Recollections of a Long Life,' by John Cam Hobhouse, afterwards Lord Broughton, which Mr. Murray is publishing next week. Hobhouse, as the reading-world well knows, was one of the most loyal of Byron's many friends, and tells in these revealing volumes a great deal which lovers of the poet (*sic*) will be glad to know."

We think that the great house of Murray might, with advantage, look out for a typewriting clerk whose admiration for the "poet" has not been cultivated to the extent of interfering with his grounding in "the three R's." But possibly "our Mr. Farquharson," who is presumably responsible for the wording of the guileless circulars with which Mr. Murray kindly favours us from time to time, does his own typewriting, and does not consider such a trifle as spelling worthy of his notice.

We are glad to see among the names of the Liberal members who are protesting against the Budget those of Sir Edward Tennant and Sir John Dickson-Poynder. As we have previously pointed out in these columns, it is men of this type who really stand for the Liberal opinion of the country. Your Lloyd Georges, your Winston Churchills and your Asquiths no more represent Liberalism than the Suffragists represent English womanhood. Claptrap and carpet-bagging may be made to look very beautiful by artists at the game; but sooner or later they are bound to come to grief. The Government now in power has been a Government of insincerities from the day of its formation. Liberals have put up with it because it went into power in the name of Liberalism. That it has since devoted itself to a fine exposition of the principles of Socialism, and even of anarchy, is not the fault of Liberalism. A good Liberal is no more likely to swallow the Budget proposals of David the Roost-Robber than is a good Tory. When it comes to open and unblushing confiscation party considerations must give way to considerations of natural justice. It is highly creditable to the gentlemen we have named and to their following that they

should make a stand against their popularity-hunting leaders. We miss the name of Mr. Ivor Guest from the combination, and we are a little sorry to see that the name of Sir Edward Grey is also missing. But probably both Mr. Guest and Sir Edward Grey are there in the spirit. If Liberalism is to be saved it will not be saved by the shouters and the distributors of other people's goods, but by the men who stand for principle as opposed to opportunism, and the broadening down of freedom as opposed to jumpiness and revolution.

Mr. Justice Darling has published a new book of verses under the title of "On the Oxford Circuit." The book is being described by the reviewers as "scholarly," "instinct with poetical feeling," and so forth. We shall prefer our indictment against it in a future issue. Meanwhile, here is a small extract from the title poem:

This that the Judge is to come—the Red Judge—to hold the assizes;
Liberty bringing to some—but to other surcease from life's labour—
Hard labour—delight of the good—awarding the bad to chastise them.
He comes to attribute restraints—and, haply, with that reformation—
For ordered revenge of the Law holdeth balm for the wound of the wronged one;
Yet causeth maleficients pain—yea, dolour impelling to virtue;
That virtue sufficing for joy in sense 'tis enough to deserve well.
So shall the best remain good, while the worst become possibly better;
Each rascal receiving his due—the cell, or the scourge, or the gallows;
Pleasant to righteousness' taste the pain a transgressor must suffer;
None taking more than his share, yet each a fair portion receiving.

This is no doubt very scholarly, in so far as it may be considered an adventure with hexameters; and from the point of view of the *Daily Mail* it may also be "instinct with poetry." But we must say frankly that in our opinion a judge at King's Bench should not publish such stuff. Flippancy about the law from the administrators of the law is not engaging. Of course, it seems to us highly probable that Mr. Justice Darling wrote the lines we have quoted long before he attained to what are known as "Judicial honours." And as some men find it difficult to write anything like passable hexameters every day of their lives, Mr. Justice Darling may in a sense be excused. On the other hand, we wish that he had refrained.

Side by side with Sir Charles Darling we shall also arraign next week a Mr. Figgis, who has published a book of verses called "A Vision of Life," and a Mr. G. K. Chesterton, who has puffed Mr. Figgis. Mr. Chesterton, of course, will be there as an accessory before the fact. Mr. Figgis writes about babies under the head of "Multum in Parvo," and to the following effect:

Baby-feet,
Scarce distinguishable forms,
Must they foot amid Life's storms
Lonely; none to soothe its qualms,
None to weet?

Baby-face,
Shall it wear the print of Time,
Woven o'er with hoary rime:
Or shall death in sunnier clime
Pallor trace?

Mr. Chesterton says: "I will not deny that much of my pleasure in Mr. Figgis's work arises from a sympathy with his serious and sincere enjoyment of beauty and the great things that life begets."

The inspired Mr. George Bernard Shaw has been called in by the equally inspired Dr. Robertson Nicoll to give us views about Algernon Charles Swinburne. Here is Shaw:

"Swinburne needed a literary inspiration: he was really always a paraphraser, and he could rise to the ideas of the author he was paraphrasing with a power quite astonishing in a man who could not rise to the life and action round him at all, and who apparently passed by natural objects without seeing them—even those natural objects of which he had paraphrased descriptions again and again. He was a splendid sounding-board, vibrating grandly to other people's conceptions; and if he had spent his life in turning Greek thought into English music he would have enriched the nation enormously. As it was, he has left us nothing but a wonderful garment of words that clothed very little of himself. His prose, with its mechanical alliterations and its continual substitution of a violent superlative qualified by an 'all but' or a 'well nigh' for the right word which he never could find, is villainous in style and often not much better in temper; but his disregard for other people's feelings and his recluse's freedom from the social influences and superstitions which muzzle the rest of us even more than our timidity and good-nature enabled him to say many things that other critics would not say. He was never stupid exactly; but he often produced an impression of disloyalty by the transition from the splendour and vigour of his echoes of revolutionary writers to the conventionality of his own views, which were made in Putney. . . . One sometimes asks whether anybody but a very dull man could have swallowed the Elizabethan dramatists so indiscriminately as he, or whether he would have swallowed them at all if he had never read Lamb. . . . Always distinguished and powerful at second hand, always commonplace and futile at first hand; great on paper, insignificant on Putney Hill."

Some day possibly somebody will be writing of somebody else: "always undistinguished and without dignity; always prancing and posturing and becking for the smiles of the half-witted; great in Battersea and Bayswater, insignificant in the Adelphi."

It seems that we have a poet amongst us who is a Member of Parliament. His name is J. Fitzalan Hope, and on Wednesday evening he recited to an amazed and tittering House the appended lines:

This is a tax on the increment value
One-fifth of which pay most certainly shall you
When the kind London gentlemen tell you how much
Is the difference of price they decide to be such
You might have got and might get from some sanguine fool
(But don't get at all in plain fact as a rule)
On a few chosen acres; meanwhile on the rest
With a decrement interest compound you are blest,
And, mind you, your house to the ground you must raze,
Your cellars fill up and your sheds set ablaze;
Your pipes you must block, and your timber must fell,
Your fruit bushes grub up and your cabbage as well,
And the lawns that proclaim your most exquisite taste,
You must forthwith reduce to a site value waste.

Then when all's a fair prairie, suburban I trow,
For the cost of destruction they'll something allow.
Thus the work goes on gaily, the owner may groan,
But the Chancellor resumes what was never his own.

On the whole the House of Commons would appear to be in a very bad way just now. Speeches in verse—and such verse—offer food for the gravest reflection.

Not to be outdone in this regard, Mrs. Kate Douglas Wiggin—Litt.D., if you please—has been addressing the Authors' Society metrically, and in this wise:

Mr. Chairman, good friends, fellow authors at table,
I fear I shall find myself not very able
To deal with that difficult subject "The Guests";
Still, one cannot evade Dr. Gosse's behests.
If only he'd said: "Talk of 'Palates of Snails,'
'The Uses of Radium,' 'Women in Jails,'
'Revisions of Tariff' or 'Copyright Laws,'
'The Prospects of Holland' or 'Rumours of Wars,'"

You can "read up" such topics in encyclopædias;
You're sure of your facts, if you're frequently tedious!

Everybody will admire such rhymes as "laws" and
"wars," not to say "encyclopædias" and "tedious,"
especially from a full-blown female Litt.D. Further
on, however, Mrs. Wiggin outwiggined Mrs. Wiggin
by remarking sublimely:

Yet though we meet often the Homer who "nods,"
We must still pour libations to gods and half gods—
Those who smile, grave, serene, from the heights of
Olympus,
And smaller ones, somewhat addicted to simpers!
We must bow to a genius whenever we see one.

For our own part we agree and bow. That it should
be possible for a society of authors in England, of
which George Meredith was president, solemnly to
listen to such doggerel, even after dinner, is almost
beyond belief. We hope in the interests of all parties
that Mrs. Wiggin's Litt.D. is an American affair.

Having discovered that its protestations of Christian
charity towards persons who wish to take the Com-
munion without being confirmed are not popular
among sensible churchmen, the *Spectator* has returned
to its old silly season enquiry: "Do Animals Reason?"
In last Saturday's issue of Mr. Strachey's excellent
journal we are treated to the ancient story of a dog who
possesses a conscience; and, of course, he is trotted
out as if he were the marvel of the age. In point of
fact, most dogs have had consciences this several
years back, and so have other animals. If Mr.
Strachey really wishes to know whether animals
reason he might visit the Palace Theatre, where he
will find on show every evening a middle-sized ape,
who can do everything except edit the *Spectator*.

The birthday honours, as usual, must have come
upon certain people with something of a shock. There
are no new peers, Mr. Pearson being still out in the
cold, and none of the Harmsworths has been made a
Duke. We weep; but we are not sorry. Art, science
and letters, however, have been remembered with
knighthoods. For example, Henry W. Lucy, Esquire,
is to be known for the future as Sir Hennery (no con-
nection, of course, with Lloyd George); Arthur Wing
Pinero, Esquire, is now Sir Arthur Wing Pinero; and,
unkindest cut of all, Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Esquire,
commonly known as Mr. Tree, must for the future be
addressed as Sir Herbert. We had always believed
that Mr. Tree was being reserved for a more substan-
tial dignity. It is a little hard that he should be

fobbed off with what he might himself describe as an ignominious knighthood. However, we congratulate all partes concerned, and we do not suppose for a moment that Mr. Tree will worry. As for Mr. Lucy, we can only say that he is sure to be as pleased as Punch. And as for Pinero, we shall expect from him a rousing play on the subject.

Dr. Robertson Nicoll really must be careful. It appears that Mr. Justice Darling proposed the toast of "Literature" at the Associated Booksellers' dinner. Dr. Robertson Nicoll was present, and he writes of the Hon. Mr. Justice Darling as follows:

"To me, the surprise of the evening was the speech of Mr. Justice Darling, who proposed the toast of 'Literature.' I had never seen Mr. Darling, but had read many of his jokes in the papers, and, like most people, had formed an opinion of him. But we found him on Saturday night both clever and humorous. He is a spare little man with a parboiled look. The eyes are lustreless, and the speaker never smiles at his own jests. But he got out some pretty fair ones."

How grateful "Mr. Darling" will be! And Dr. Nicoll concludes his report of the proceedings with the following beautiful words:

"Among the most observed of the guests was Mr. Humphry Ward, whose strong, handsome, Jewish face would draw attention anywhere."

Surely the worthy author of "Sunday Afternoon Verses" is forgetting his manners!

We are afraid that our readers, like ourselves, must be beginning to get tired of the constant references in these columns to Mr. Frank Harris and his remarkable freak journal, *Vanity Fair*. For our part we should be delighted if we never had occasion to mention his name again. Unfortunately, however, Mr. Harris's vagaries are so astounding that it is impossible to allow them to go altogether unnoticed. Mr. Harris is a gentleman who imagines himself to be, among a great many other things, an accomplished critic, and by dint of roaring out his conviction that this is the case he has succeeded in making people believe it. As a matter of fact, he has no critical faculty whatever. The surest proof of this is to be found in the quality of the poetry which he prints in *Vanity Fair*. But there are other spheres of criticism in which one would have expected that at least he would be able to avoid making an exhibition of himself. Here is what Mr. Harris has to say about Yvette Guilbert:

"We went the other night to see Yvette Guilbert, who is, of course, as extraordinary as ever in her French songs, and who, strange to say, was rapturously applauded by the house in her English songs as well, which we found a good deal of difficulty in understanding."

It is almost incredible that anyone can be found to talk such preposterous rubbish. Yvette Guilbert's rendering of her French songs is certainly beautiful and striking enough, but for sheer unadulterated beauty and accomplishment we have never heard anything to equal her rendering of the old English ballads, "The Keys of Heaven" and the "Gallant Man." Mr. Harris, of course, belongs to that school of critics who think it the height of discrimination to assert that everything is done better in France, a country with which they usually have a very meagre acquaintance.

We shall print next week an article entitled "High Poetry," which will be delicious reading for Mr. Spender and for all persons who love their sea-green, incorruptible *Westminster*.

THE TRAVELLERS

Ort I consider jocund Youth, with song
And merrimake upon the sunlit road;
And Age, bowed down beneath his heavy load,
To whom the sorrows of the world belong:
One in the beauty of a gracious prime,
Exulting to the music of desire;
The other glad once to have held the lyre,
And to have dwelt in seigniorage of Time.

Sojourners are they from a distant land,
Who have come long leagues across the hills of Morn;
With eager, infinite hearts I see them stand,
Listening in dimness to the heavenward lark:
They are drunk with joy, with loneliness forlorn,
And they go forth again into the dark.

S. S.

THE CENSORSHIP AND COMMON-SENSE

ON the face of it, a body of poets seems scarcely an ideal organisation to debate upon so entirely unpoetic a matter as the dramatic censorship. To Mr. George Bernard Shaw, however—and quite properly, too, for that matter—any audience is better than no audience. The Poets' Club, accordingly, have just been "privileged" to hear Mr. Redford's latest "victim" hold forth in characteristic vein on the Censor and all his works. It is true that the gathering contained merely poetasters, instead of poets, and that only one dramatist, in the person of a young lady, was present; but the occasion was none the less an interesting one.

Mr. Bernard Shaw is never so happy as when he is talking about himself. At the Poets' Club last week he had a thoroughly congenial topic, and, as need scarcely be said, he did not fail to make the most of it. To Mr. Shaw, and those who agree with him, the sooner the Censor's head is served up on a charger the better. Nothing else, apparently, will satisfy him. Some of the *dicta* he laid down in support of his arguments strike people who do not happen to be distinguished dramatists a little curiously. One, for example, was "immorality is the very thing that is necessary to progress"; and another, "decency, in its essence, is not within the jurisdiction of the Censor at all"; while a third pronouncement was to the effect that a play should be produced first and licensed afterwards. These views are certainly somewhat startling. Fortunately, however, very few people are likely to take them seriously.

As with most matters to which he applies himself, so with this one of the dramatic censorship, Mr. Shaw sees only one side of the case. And he only sees this particular side from his own limited point of view. In all probability he quite honestly believes that no other exists. He has written a play and Mr. Redford, representing the Lord Chamberlain, representing the King, representing Tom, Dick and Harry, has banned it. Therefore the times are out of joint, and only Mr. Bernard Shaw can set them right. Such, briefly, are the premises on which is built up an elaborate argument for the abolition of the system under which plays are licensed at theatres controlled by the Lord Chamberlain. But, really, the argument scarcely holds water—much less anything more convincing. To begin with, there must be taken into consideration the extremely significant fact that the managers—who, after all, are concerned to a far greater degree than the dramatists—are practically unanimously in favour

of retaining the censorship. The system is one which, on the whole, has been found to work smoothly, and the managers are, accordingly, quite content to let well alone. Besides, apart from this, the people who conduct theatres recognise that the censorship really acts as a protection to them. This is because once a play has been licensed they can produce it, secure in the knowledge that no crank or busybody can subsequently demand its suppression on the grounds of its impropriety. We must either have a censor or Scotland Yard, and Mr. Redford—despite his sins—is the lesser of the two evils. In America—"the Land of the Free"—theatrical managers have to deal with Mr. Comstock. This, no doubt, explains why Mr. Frohman spends most of his time in London.

Besides, what, after all, is the particular hardship in the exercise of the dramatic censorship? It is really difficult to see that there is one. Under the present regulations practically any play is licensed as a matter of course, so long as it is neither indecent, nor irreligious, nor politically offensive. Surely, nobody can reasonably object to this. If people insist on writing plays to which these disqualifications apply—well, they have no business to expect them to be licensed. Certainly the censorship has never been put in force against any play to which one or other of these disqualifications has not applied in greater or lesser degree. It is no argument for the abolition of the present system to say that objectionable plays have been licensed. Mr. Redford is only human, and a great deal slips through his net. The contention that plays should be produced first and licensed afterwards is unreasonable and absurd. Managers can scarcely be expected to go to the trouble and expense of producing a piece which they might be called upon to withdraw the next night at the instance of the police or a common informer. They prefer—and very wisely—to know beforehand just how far they can go. From the elegant extracts, and synopsis of the plot, relating to "The Showing-Up of Blanco Posnet," which Mr. Shaw has published, most people would have but little difficulty in deciding that Mr. Redford was quite right to ban it.

The real truth about the censorship is not that it is too strict, but that it is not nearly strict enough. At one time Paterfamilias used to send his wife to the theatre and go himself to the music-hall. Now he changes the tickets. He knows from experience which offers the more suitable form of entertainment. Nor is his decision remarkable when one reflects on the fare frequently set before patrons of the theatre nowadays. Quite a number of authors appear constitutionally unable to distinguish the obstetric from the dramatic. For example, one of the recently prohibited plays actually dealt with an illegal operation, and the illustrious author thinks himself very hardly treated because this choice masterpiece was vetoed. What on earth did he expect? Probably a pension from the Royal Literary Fund and the Order of Merit. What he did get, however, was a vast amount of misdirected sympathy and support from sycophantic nobodies who here saw an easy way of hoisting themselves into publicity. Of course, there have been cases when the censorship has pressed a little unfairly, for in the exercise of his responsible duties the present occupant of the office strains at a good many gnats. Still, he also swallows camels to a much greater extent than did some of his predecessors. English playwrights, too, may perhaps take comfort from the fact that, whatever their grievances, they are nothing to those under which Continental dramatists have laboured. Not so long ago, for example, it was a strict rule on the Austrian stage that no pair of lovers should retire from a scene unless accompanied by a chaperon. It is also recorded that Schiller's "Maid of Orleans" was originally refused a

licence on the grounds that the title was "too frivolous"!

A point generally lost sight of or ignored when arguing this vexed question of the censorship is that the propriety of a play depends quite as much (if not more) on the acting than on the dialogue. On this account a censorship of acting is badly wanted. Thus, a musical comedy or a Palais Royal farce—although not perhaps the acme of refinement or literary grace—may be perfectly harmless in itself, but yet a most improper and salacious entertainment solely by reason of the way it is acted. Even "East Lynne" could be rendered indecent if the heroine and Little Willie gave their minds to the task. This is because on the stage visible effects always make a greater appeal than audible ones. When one goes to the theatre one remembers very little of what one has heard in comparison with what one has seen. Indeed, the average person, after witnessing a play, would find it difficult to quote six lines of the dialogue correctly; still—and unless bored to extinction by the performance—he could probably give a very fair account of the acting. But indecency must not be confused with vulgarity. There is a marked difference between the two. Where the drama is concerned a good working rule is for all practical purposes supplied by the etymological derivation of these respective terms. This shows that indecency comes from the French, and vulgarity from the Latin.

"THROUGH A GLASS, DARKLY"

IN the corner of a certain western English county a hillside field, thick with buttercups, rises steeply into the summer air. Its sweet, solemn curve of gold, first and lowest against the dark green woods far down the valley, then a fringe backed by white, stately clouds, then soaring till it stands silhouetted against the faultless ethereal blue of the sky, is one of those half-divine, mystical things for which our poor human speech can furnish no adequate name. Stunned by the shock of such beauty, our usual modes of expression do not respond. Our lips are silent, our eyes are dimmed, the wings of thought are suddenly expanded to lift on the winds of dreamland. We are as travellers enchanted "who may not laugh or weep," who, wandering some difficult high road, in glare and dust and dismay, should see the cool green gloom of a forest by-path; and, turning aside in their weary walking, should find fairy-haunted dells and bowers, the home of faun and dryad and elfin woodmen, girdled with shadowy streams and softly resounding with the songs of happy birds. What use to them, the ordinary desultory phrases of pleasure or adoration? The intensest form of adoration is silence; the shallow rill makes more noise in its whirling eddies than the mighty, measured flood of the river. Before that sweep of golden flowers, swinging between woods and sky, the earthly horizon narrowed, the bonds of time and space were loosened, the place where our footsteps trod became suddenly holy ground. Was it merely the entrancement of form, of outline, which induced this miracle? Was it merely the call of the massed, rich colour that charmed our senses? Or did colour and shape combine to thrill the heart? Or with the glimpse of that radiant line did the apprehension of some far-spoken syllable enter our consciousness, some divine breath of a language which no mortal has yet learned? Inaudible to the physical ear, its words might consist as easily of visible signs as of a series of sounds, our usual conception of language, and its appeal might be to our subtle, spiritual sense, that "sense of the infinite" by which we maintain our relationship with things unseen. Such a word might be spoken when the dawn, like some wonderful bloom of heaven springing from the blackest ground of night, grows and unfolds

its perfection in a single, silent hour. Such a word, faint and far, might be felt to have been uttered when from lofty mountain-tops the pale mist creeps down as though to veil some secret ceremony of angelic hosts; or when, bold and bare and grand, the crags rise in high fragrant summer noons from the purple garment of heather cast about their feet. The slightest things may bring a whisper of that outer, ineffable language; the laugh of a child, sudden and clear and fearless; the unexpected call of a name from beloved lips; the moon-path on the sea; the song of a drowsy bird; the salt ocean-breath blown across a garden of roses. The meaning of these signs has never been written, can never be wholly learned; we can but wait and listen and treasure each ecstasy as a gift from a land unseen, precious and imperishable. For the moment we are caught up and shown the kingdoms, not of earth, but the heavenly kingdoms, our mortal eyes being holden; we are breathless, wondering, worshipping at the feet of the eternal.

Man approaches the infinite, tries to place himself in appreciable relation with these vast, enchanted oceans which surround his little isle of consciousness, by various ways, and each way will have its own manifold deviations. Earth calls him with a voice that is not earthly:

He builds the soaring spires
That sing his soul in stone; of her he draws,
Though blind to her, by spelling at her laws,
Her purest fires.

The true artist, beholding the glory of the world in a woman's face, finds himself strangely elated by a glory as of the divine, shining through mortal eyes and revealed in curves of mortal flesh, and to those who see his finished portrait come moments of mystical communion, fleeting, delicate convictions, echoes as of music half-remembered, elusive adventures of the soul. His brother artist, no less true, beholding the glory of the world in a blossoming orchard, in grey evenings when the "dreamy, gloomy, friendly trees" stand listening for the last low sigh of twilight, in the dusky city streets, paints into his picture something more than the cloud of frail, pink petals, more than the dark, motionless woodland broken against the sunken fires of the west, more than the crowded houses and shops, and for him, also, "the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." Even so another will set sail on the limitless sea to a wind laden with music, overflowing with harmonies, murmuring with song. Far below the horizon are the players, yet towards them he pursues his devious way, faltering often, but trimming his sails to right and left that the very breezes which baffle him may send his vessel slowly onward. To him music opens most widely the gate of the infinite. The poet finds in human language the cage by which his dreams, his imaginings, his desires, can be imprisoned, so we have the exquisite "Madonna Mia" of Swinburne singing itself into our hearts, the echoes of Browning's "By the Fireside" taking us unawares, or the purity and melody of Meredith's "Love in the Valley" haunting us in sudden summer hours. The door of the temple is unbarred—we have entered and heard beyond the symbols of written language, beyond the sound of the spoken, rhythmic word, the summoning voice from the holy of holies, whose veil no man till death may tear aside.

But the men who discover the vision are not all artists, poets, musicians. The poet is comrade with him who reads and thrills to the magical cadences, who yet may not possess the power to write; the musician, with him who listens and understands; the artist shares his dream with the man who sees that curve of golden flowers, that wondrous splendour of orchards in blossom-time, those brooding shapes at evening, that divine investiture of a woman's face and form, but who could never

set the faintest intimation of these things on the blank canvas. It is no disgrace to hear the music one can never make, to see the beauty one can never interpret, to burn with another's poetic fire.

As plants turn toward the sun, so does the human soul seek the light of this mysterious realm wherefrom it may draw knowledge of things divine. Into the great vague ocean man lets fall his hopelessly trivial measuring lines of conscious thought and laboured reasoning, only to feel how little he can know, how far he has "come short of the glory." He has his dreams, his hours of passionate delight, his tranquil hours of patient thought, his secret experiences of the mind, when he seems to stand on the verge of countries lost to memory, of unfamiliar seas, whence come echoes from the conversations of the great gods:

Such as we hear in youth, and think the feeling
Will never die; yet, ere we are aware,
The feeling and the sound are fled and gone,
And the regret they leave remains alone.

Reasoning avails little when the mind attempts to solve by intellectual pertinacity problems which belong to the realm of intuition, of impermanent, whispered suggestions, of quiet, receptive pauses in life's harsh and headlong career. For by its explicit nature reason is forced to proceed on prescribed lines, to argue and deduce from past events; its chief duty is "to receive, arrange, register, and transmit the traditions which are the real substance of man's experience." The transient fantasy of some poet's imagination, the prayerful vision of some trembling saint, clasping a hand unseen, are more living and real and decisive than all the syllogisms of clever logicians when confronting these impalpable things of the spirit. Keen, with an almost dangerous keenness, is the soul for any testimony that can by any twisted possibility aid it in its ingrained task, for any light, fierce or gentle, that may shine down the tortuous labyrinth of fruitless days, any guide that may haply lead to that unknown Bethlehem where its gifts of adoration may be sweetly laid. Hence many who crave the answer to the eternal world-question as to the meaning of it all, of life, of death, of these premonitions of immortality, find false stars, worthless guides, prophets whose message is pitiful and vain. Too eagerly they pursue the deceptive sensation of a passing voice, a tempting hour, too closely follow the poet's words:

Methinks with all this loss I were content
If the mad Past, on which my foot is based,
Were firm, or might be blotted; but the whole
Of life is mixed: the mocking Past will stay;
And if I drink oblivion of a day,
So shorten I the stature of my soul.

The quest, after all, resolves itself into the search for God. Nature and art are both manifestations of the Divine, paradoxical though the statement may seem; for art is of man, but man is of God. (So much the more, we may observe in parenthesis, should man be very careful not to debase his art, whatever form it takes, since by just so much as he dishonours his powers at the call of cupidity or sensuality or popularity, does his soul become enveloped by a treacherous brightness that binds it to earthly and unworthy ideals; and by just so much as he preserves his talents and himself pure and sincere and shameless, does his spirit draw near to the throne from whence they were given. The artist who dishonours his art sins against his own soul, not only cramping its wings, but—which is far worse—depriving it little by little of those aspirations for finer, more splendid flight which had kept it strong. He files wilfully at the golden chain which binds him to the divine.) The answer to Zophar's remonstrance with Job, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" is that to a certain extent we can, though not "unto perfection." Mystery

upon mystery surrounds us; we are as children in the simple rules of an arithmetic-book confronted with the immense bewilderingments of the calculus, confounded, embarrassed, even at times rebellious. Let us ponder the words of a great philosopher, and note his comparison:

To the minnow every cranny and pebble, and quality and accident of its little native creek may have become familiar; but does the minnow understand the ocean tides and periodic currents, the trade winds and monsoons, and moon's eclipses, by all which the condition of its little creek is regulated, and may from time to time (un-miraculously enough) be quite overset and reversed? Such a minnow is man; his creek this planet Earth; his ocean the immeasurable All; his monsoons and periodic currents the mysterious course of Providence through æons of æons.

The little dried acorn that we hold in our hand, that lies on our table—it may stay there for years, inert, apparently dead; but we place it in a handful of mould, and it becomes alive, with roots that strike deeper and deeper, leaves that press upward and, like clenched baby fists, unfold to the morning light. Mystery of mystery! Wherein dwells the miracle—in the dark mould, in the acorn? And why brings this seed an oak, and that one a beech, and a third a blade of wheat, and another a frail, marvellous flower? The flower dies, but the touch of the pollen from some lover unseen has given its casket of precious seed the kiss of life, and the circle of reproduction is completed; so, too, happen the sacred mysteries of human love, of motherhood, of the birth of a new soul. Is there no God behind all this, seen as "through a glass, darkly"? From our tiny point of vantage in the awful expanses of space, whereon the brain cannot think without confusion, we watch the dazzling silvery crescent of Venus, the ardent flame of Mars, the clouded golden glow of the giant Jupiter, the slow sway of Saturn's tremendous rings, the faint, far globe of Uranus, the frugal light of remoter Neptune, deliberately hurling his ashen orb in the deeps round our sun, held immutably to his track as by chains of firmest steel; then past them all we descry, as it were round our horizon-line, the signal-lamps of ships whose long courses will never come near to our own—the pale, pure radiance of Vega, the steady glare of Arcturus, the wax and wane of Algol, spelling to us his ceaseless word across the million leagues of gloom, the iridescent shimmer of kingly Sirius, and a thousand lesser lights—and suddenly we realise that with us in solemn harmony float worlds upon worlds, suns beyond suns, swinging majestically in stupendous motion through distances so vast that the flight of their gleam to us has to be counted in years, not seconds; realise that they have been so from unfathomable time, and will be so when, in the abyss of ages, we are but the dust of an angel's dream. Is there no God behind all this? O poor, dull Atheist, fumbling with thy little keys at the portals of the eternal "whereof our sun is but a porch-lamp," canst thou not pause for one luminous moment? "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion?" "Canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven?" Truly "we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow."

From these profound mysteries that can only be sought adequately with the aid of instruments of man's devising to that wave of flowers breaking down the steep June meadow is but a step; in them all is the God we seek. "The merest nothing reveals His presence, and the greatness of our lives depends on so little." "The Spirit itself," said Paul, "beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God," and it is permissible to think that in these moments of vision arising from simple, natural things seen under certain transforming conditions, or in certain exalted moods,

we approach very near to the central fact of the universe, from which all hope springs and radiates—the existence of that immanent, perfect God, careful of man, anxious for his happiness, craving for his worship and his highest thought, yet forbidding him save through his own efforts to touch the divine. The frailty and the ineffectiveness of our few moments of reproach can perhaps be ascribed to the competitive energy of modern life. We find little leisure for contemplation. Time overwhelms us; it is a tragedy; "there are hints of it in the movement of the dial-hand, in the withering of flowers, in the wrinkles on the beautiful face; it comes home with the harvests of autumn, and darkens hope in the eclipses of the sun and moon; the yellowing papers of the poet and the crumbling pyramids of the builder tell of it; it speaks in the waves that break upon the shore, and in the histories that commemorate bygone civilisations; all things decay." All things decay, but to-day we are too liable to suppose that death stands, a grim oppression, at the end of a short vista of years, ravenous and pitiless; held in the grip of this undercurrent of imagination our best strength is sapped in the endeavour to seize the passing hour, to cheat that spectre of a portion of its prey, to eat, drink, and be merry with a feverish earnestness, to accomplish some earthly fame with an almost spiteful triumph. We cannot bring ourselves to regard the collapse of the body as a climax to which life inevitably and easily ascends, a stage in the progress of the soul as absolutely natural as that of life, by which we may in one splendid instant attain that indivisible union with God which in our unspoiled state we crave. In this earthly part of life the body is the soul's only means of expression, its only means of entreating sympathy and companionship from others; the glance of the eye, the clasp of a hand, the tone of a voice, are its strivings after speech, often utterly incompetent to convey the whole passionate, perfect truth when one soul salutes its fellow. What tremendous freedoms, splendid communions, heavenly reasonings together might not be possible when the body has served its purpose and is discarded as the new-winged creature shakes off its clumsy chrysalis—when the soul takes upon itself the finer, untrammelled sight and speech and touch of the infinite? "Write the things which thou hast seen," came the voice to St. John, "and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;" but the vision does not come save by prayer and fasting, and they have gone out of fashion. The vision, however, exists, and if here we stumble towards the light by paths unknown, over hills of desolation and loneliness, and through valleys peopled with unfriendly shadows, it is well to remember that "now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face."

A PROBLEM—AND A SUGGESTION

THERE are some interesting people of whom the world, with every opportunity of mending its ways, takes not the slightest heed, perhaps partly, as a critic has said, because the world is ignored by them. Chance and still chances have been offered to the public to make the acquaintance of an inspired dramatic poem, and, apparently the world is blind. The work was published in Charles Wells's twenty-fifth year—in 1824; the young man then sauntered off to the Continent, where he did nothing for the rest of his life; in 1876 Swinburne and Rossetti clamoured for its republication, and Mr. Watts-Dunton wrote in the *Athenæum*: "The poem itself—in the revised form—is before the public, to win—for it cannot again miss—its place in English literature." Lastly, in 1908, it was included in Mr. Frowde's edition of the "World's Classics." The total result of these things appears to be that the

man who wrote a great poem in a spirit of rivalry with Keats at the age of a little over twenty—and created nothing more, except some vanished prose—attracts as little public attention after death by his work as he did by his extraordinary personality during life. To ninety-nine informed readers out of a hundred Wells is the author of "Tono-Bungay," but that fine novel is not "Joseph and His Brethren." Time proceeds; heroic efforts have been made; yet little emerges. The obscurity of the prior Wells is a problem.

In one of the letters written from Samoa Stevenson bewailed his friends. Wells cared little for his work and less for his reputation. But if he were alive now even he might have a word of reflection upon those who have made it their business to introduce him to the people. Rossetti, Swinburne and Mr. Watts-Dunton are three admirers of whom any poet, living or dead, might be proud; and they have, especially the last two, interpreted his poetry with the generous and penetrative criticism which is their incomparable monopoly; yet we suggest that they have unintentionally done a man of original genius an injury which has worked in a very subtle manner. Both were impressed with the fifty years' neglect of the poet's work—Mr. Watts-Dunton has forwarded many explanations of that neglect—and both proceeded to make amends by brilliant and unquestionable comparisons with former writers. Swinburne, in his introduction, penned many phrases like ". . . stateliness of manner, which recalls the more equable cadences of Shakespeare"; "two such lines . . . would suffice, with a certain school of commentators, to establish the unquestionable partnership of Shakespeare"; "recalls the luxury and exuberance . . . of Marlowe." In fact, a large part of Swinburne's essay is a proof that "Joseph" is Elizabethan. Rossetti stated that the play was more Shakespearean than anything out of Shakespeare, and cited the influence of Blake. Mr. Watts-Dunton, quoting from both, compares the richness of Keats, and we learn that in richness Wells comes nearer to Shakespeare than did Keats. In the midst of all this—the above is a microscopic selection—one is tempted to ask: What of Charles Wells? From a perusal of the Prefatory Note on Rossetti and Wells the answer might come: Oh, he was a *protégé* of Rossetti!

Of course, this method is the most accredited and customary of estimating a poet's position; and, of course, since Swinburne has said it, the affinity with Shakespeare exists. But more, it is obvious. One might fill columns with phrases and lines which seem to come right out of Shakespeare, without drawing from Swinburne's selection. Not merely is the influence of Blake apparent; such phrases as:

"To me a simple flower is cloth'd with thoughts
That lead the mind to Heaven"

suggest Wordsworth to the first observer. Not merely is much of the richness comparable with Keats, there is the same delight in words, playing on words, and repetition to excess. "Umber" occurs thrice in a few lines, "zon'd" is a favourite, "golden" is almost cheap by reason of its frequency. Not merely is the inspiration of these English masters in poetry easily demonstrable, but

"Surely, my brothers, you are not so bad,
So bloody, so unnaturally given,"

is plainly derived from a source which, naturally, considering the subject, supplies very much. Indeed, it would be surprising if, in work so young, what Lecky called the formative influences of style were not superficially and abundantly manifest. But it is just because the influences are so patent that it would have been

perhaps advisable not to have drawn such extreme attention to them at the first; it is perhaps just the intended praise that has worked as blame. For what sort of an effect would such criticism have upon the public which was to see that this poem did not again "miss its place"—upon *οἱ πολλοὶ* for ever a-gape for some new thing? Here was a man not merely unknown—worse still, forgotten. They were told he was a great poet, worthy of revival, although on a first publication his work "fell dead from the press." What was the "apology" of his admirers?—he wrote Shakespearean blank verse. That was something, of course, but it was also rather too obvious. They wanted more—a message, a fresh touch, something new. In the case of Wells it was difficult to find. Wherein was the man justified as an original poet? Would the critics point it out? In fact, it is possible that those who saw, and see, no difference between slavishly imitative work and the rich fruits of study, have been inclined to reject Charles Wells as an imitator, as a man without a "style." Misunderstanding the critics and confirmed in their mistake by a doubting and cursory inspection of the text, many may have closed the book and its remembrance with a sigh for another secondhand. For the one thing no public will endure, in its poetry at any rate, is a *simulacrum* of plagiarism; it has no profound perception of originality, but it worships it; it will read Shakespeare, when it will—in Shakespeare; if it is told, or thinks it is told, that a new man is a disciple and again a disciple, it will have small time for his words. In fact, in the very peculiar case of Wells, very unlikely in any circumstance to make a great impression with but one published work, it might have been better to have drawn attention to the new features rather than to the old, at least to defer the method by comparison to an analysis of his own particular worth.

But to prove to a public that refuses to read him that the man was unique (as Swinburne and the rest never intended to deny) is something of a problem. It is all the harder precisely because his originality was profound and his art impersonal. For he did not rely—as so many writers do to-day—on shallow trick-work or a facile exhibition of his own superficialities. "Joseph and His Brethren" must be read, even re-read, before it convinces by a combination of poetic and dramatic feeling which, in no other writing, produces exactly the same effect. We freely admit, at the risk of repetition, that the passages which appeal most strikingly at a first reading may often be found to be derived. But the age of the writer may be remembered; and, even so, Mr. Watts-Dunton's phrase, "The Great Might Have Been of English Poetry," is liable to misinterpretation. The wonderful close of the First Act, culminating in the stricken Jacob's simple words:

"Carry me in, for I am very weak,
And let there be no noise,"

is proof by itself that the author possessed an instinctive and developed dramatic sense. The delineation of Potiphar's wife in the second act could only have been done by one man; if in the subtle and passionate dialogue the influence of Shakespeare is felt, Browning is anticipated throughout. "At last I leave you, sir," says the infuriated and baffled Phraxanor, "without a single comfort in the world," and, as she goes, the ruined Joseph replies, "God is in Heaven, madam, with your leave." Much study does not enable a man to write like that.

With a general analysis of Wells's excellence we can have nothing to do here. His absolute fidelity to the Bible story in spirit and in phrase (in spite of some anachronisms) has been pointed out before. It is enough to say that the original is expanded to contain

the poetry, the poetry does not swamp the Eastern tale. But a man who can be witty in such a story without writing out of tone is surely something rare. Extractive quotation is nearly always destructive, and the following is hardly the best possible example, but it suggests the heavy sort of irony that is Wells's compromise with wit and humour. "Come—come," expostulates Joseph, "you are too dull—churlishly given." "Aye," grumbles the Chief Baker, "I am given to a dungeon cell, and, wonderful to you, do not rejoice." But of all the factors that make the personality of "Joseph and His Brethren" the most significant of those that appear to have gone unnoticed is the apt exposition of the commonplace, or, rather, the individualisation of the universally appealing, which is one of the prerogatives of great writers. Wells is not always felicitous here; occasionally his immaturity shows through—immaturity though the work was revised in old age; occasionally the fourth act is dull, if not banal; and once, at least, crudity breaks bounds when Joseph exclaims:

"Strangers! What men are these?—not Egypt born—
Great God! they are my brothers—sure they're come,
Driven from valed tents in search of food."

But the nearly sublime is often ridiculous, even in greater poets, and Wells does not often offend. His method is various. Either he turns an obvious phrase into a striking one by a slight touch, as in:

"More than the mind of man dare *ape* to think,"

and in:

"I bless thee from the *middle* of my heart;"

or his effect is produced simply by artistic placing and skilful preparation:

"All is not love in sensuality"

loses everything but obviousness in losing the context. It comes daringly from Joseph to Phraxanor. Again, Myrah's simple interpolation:

" Then you would say
That there is nothing in the world but love—"

shines with startling clarity in the midst of Phraxanor's burning metaphors. Thirdly, he sometimes convinces by sheer force of language, as when he writes:

" Things of joy to die
Upon the action—Joy is the grave of joy.
And all the past that was so long a-doing
Is swallow'd in the minute that's to come."

Wells is not rich, because he gorgeously reflects Keats, or Shakespeare. Neither is his writing "thin," as even the most brilliant exercise must be. Space forbids quotation; but in the third act there is a 200-line description of an Eastern processional ceremony which, for sustained imagery, for a masterly exposition of the arabesque and the grotesque, for a combination of horror and beauty, would be hard to match. Surely an attitude that emphasises Wells's debt to others is in danger of minimising our debt to Wells. The best means of solving the problem of a century of neglect is to present him on his own merits to the public, not as a Shakespeare student or as a Rossetti find. "Brand" was played in Christiania. News comes that an English audience is to witness "Peer Gynt." "Joseph and His Brethren," with its twenty-four scenes and long monologues and prologues, was not written for production; but at least Act II. is fitted for the stage. If "In a Balcony" can be played, so can "The

Defiance of Phraxanor." We offer the suggestion, for what it is worth, to the managers of the Afternoon Theatre, who, at the time of writing, are in need of matter.

REVIEWS

LAURUS NOBILIS

Laurus Nobilis: Chapters on Art and Life. By VERNON LEE. (Lane, 3s. 6d.)

IN the essay as a form of literary art, the lady who writes pleasantly under the name of Vernon Lee has attained a fair measure of success, but the reader who approaches this latest volume of hers in a critical mood will find himself at a loss, for a while, to state a definite opinion on it. Many platitudes, much good sense, some beauty, and a few assertions which will probably strike him as altogether erroneous, combine to produce rather a wavering image in his mind. The style of her previous books has pleased us more, and the platitudes—that awful danger of the essayist—have not been so abounding. The parenthesis, when used to the unconscionable extent of seven or eight bracketed interpolations in a couple of pages, is an irritant to bewilder the most lenient reader; it almost spoils one or two of the papers. Again, the recurrent personal phrases—"I hope I have made clear enough" . . . "Let us now proceed to" . . . "I have said that" . . . "I think you will all of you admit that" . . . are inappropriate to and incongruous with the austerity of the subject, and are unhappily suggestive of sermonising or of platform oratory of a mediocre type; they get on the nerves and mar the prose irremediably.

All the essays concern themselves with branches of the same topic—the relation of art to life: a theme large enough, in all conscience, but one which demands, we fear, a deeper vein of thought, inquiry, and deliberation, a finer power of arrangement, elimination, and exposition, than the author can claim to possess. They would make pretty little separate flower-pot plants for—shall we say?—the window-sill of the *Saturday Westminster Gazette*, quite unambitious, and admirable in their way; but presented to the world as a stout tree we must say that a considerable amount of pruning and forcing would have improved the effect. Some of the foliage is too thin. Discussing the notion that love of beauty "can help to bring about a better distribution of the world's riches" the author asks: "What are the bulk of worldly possessions to their owners: houses, parks, plate, jewels, superfluous expenditure of all kinds (and armies and navies when we come to national wastefulness)—what are all these ill-distributed riches save ideas, ideas futile and ungenerous, food for the soul, but food upon which the soul grows sick and corrupteth?" This sort of questioning comes perilously near the borderline either of nonsense or of incomprehensibility—it does not much matter which. Later on we have these sentences: "One thing seems certain, that the artistic activities are those which bring man into emotional communion with external Nature; and that such emotional communion is necessary for man's thorough spiritual health." So far we are in hearty agreement, albeit the sentiment is not new; but from the corollary which the author strives to maintain we can but differ completely: "Perception of cause and effect, generalisation of law, reduces the universe, indeed, to what man's intellect can grasp; but in the process of such reduction to the laws of man's thought, the universe is shorn of its very power to move man's emotion and overwhelm his soul." Surely precisely the reverse holds good for any thinking human being? The more we learn of cause and effect, of law and splendour of law in the cosmos, the more we

thrill with adoration, the more we feel that the place whereon we stand is holy ground. The flower loses none of its beauty, nor a whit of its power to move us, when we can perceive its pistil and stamens, its various, marvellous, methodic equipment for preservation and reproduction. The mysterious perturbations of Uranus, worked out with infinite care by the finest and most delicate mathematical formulæ, did they not lead to the most astounding and beautiful discovery of modern astronomy, to the assertion that at a certain spot in the heavens at a certain hour another planet ought to be found, a planet which had never yet been seen; the direction of the telescope to that spot, and the recognition in a moment in the pale disc that swam into view of an outer world in allegiance to our sun, in harmony with ourselves, hurling itself in lonely grandeur round its prodigious orbit? Is there no poetry, no "power to move man's emotion" in this? Surely, yes.

We like best of these essays the one entitled, "The Art and the Country." Vernon Lee is at her highest level when she discards philosophy and merely describes things seen. Take, for instance, this charming little picture of a corner of her favourite land:

Save in the lushness of early summer, Tuscany is, on the whole, pale; a country where the loveliness of colour is that of its luminousness, and where light is paramount. From this arises, perhaps, the austerity of its true summer—summer when fields are bare, grass burnt to delicate cinnamon and russet, and the hills, with their sere herbs and bushes, seem modelled out of pale rosy or amethyst light; an austerity for the eye corresponding to a sense of healthfulness given by steady, intense heat, purged of all damp, pure like the scents of dry leaves, of warm cypress resin and of burnt thyme and myrrh of the stony ravines and stubbly fields. On such August days the plain and the more distant mountains will sometimes be obliterated, leaving only the inexpressible suavity of the hills on the same side as the sun, made of the texture of the sky, lying against it like transparent and still luminous shadows. . . . That effect is the most powerful, sweetest, and most restorative in all Nature, perhaps; a bath for the soul in pure light and air.

The severest critic could hardly improve on this, and we could have wished for more papers in the same happy strain. Other dissertations on "Art and Usefulness" and "Wasteful Pleasures" are interesting, and in parts suggestive, but on the whole the feelings of pleasant anticipation with which we usually open a book of this author's prose have suffered a slight interruption.

CORNISH TALES

Our Little Town. By CHARLES LEE. (Gibbins and Co., Ltd., 3s. 6d.).

THERE are not many abstract qualities more difficult to weave into words than the charm which pervades any particular district, such as the western portion of our island, and especially does this difficulty make itself felt when the fact is taken into consideration that the majority of readers must naturally be ignorant personally of that charm, that *aura* of the land which is so irresistible to those who have once experienced it. Whatever strangers to the West-country may think of this book (and they can hardly be hostile to a work so full of humour and humanity), to one hailing from Cornwall it is a pure delight. "Our Little Town" is Porthulyan—there is a lingering music in the sound; it is reminiscent of Luxulyan, Polperro, Porthpean, Burngallow, and a hundred other haunting Cornish names, and it has evidently a beloved original for which is reserved a very warm place in the author's heart. The life of the village is portrayed in chapters which are as good and as exciting as those of many a novel, and as a sure test of their quality, the reader finds himself as absorbingly concerned about the ultimate fate of the silk hat of "James-

over-to-shop," or the choice of an organist for the Methodist chapel, or of twenty other breathless events, as he usually is when the destinies of great nations swing in the balance. Of that tall hat—the only one in the locality—we must just sketch the history; it is too good to miss. James had recently married Julia—the surnames do not matter—and a visitor from London, staying with them, lost his hat in a high wind and had to return to town hurriedly in a cloth cap belonging to the young fisherman, promising compensation. This arrived duly in the shape of a brand-new "topper," much to James's discomfort and his wife's pride:

"Well now," said Julia, as she carefully extracted the gift from its swathings of tissue paper—"well now, I do call this handsome of Mr. Smith! A drum-hat! How it do shine! Real handsome, to be sure, and cost a pretty penny, I'll be bound."

"Shouldn't wonder," said Jamesy, regarding it with uneasy disfavour. "But what's going to do by en? That's what I want to know."

"Do, thou bafflehead?" cried Julia, with a fond smile to soften the rude word. "Do? Why, wear en, to be sure!"

Their walk to chapel next morning was humorously elevated by Porthulyan into a triumphal procession. Subdued cheers were raised, hats were doffed, curtsies dropped, and a band of urchins beating imaginary drums cleared the way for the pair. Julia walked along, rigidly unconscious, her pretty nose in the air; while the victim of fashion, his hand convulsively grasping the unruly hat, alternately twisted an uneasy deprecatory grin on the spectators, and relaxed the same to whisper a savage, "I told 'e so!" in his wife's ear.

James's life becomes a misery for a short time, but he "gets even" by wearing the objectionable article every day, and standing fire of chaff from his mates manfully; strange tales of a mad fisherman circulated, and Julia was almost in tears. But a day came when the weather kept James at home idle, with the hat on the table, brim upwards, and his wife silent and miserable. Then entered Spotty, a pet Bantam of privileges, hunting for a suitable depository for eggs:

From the window-sill to Jamesy's shoulder was a single fluttering leap; another took her from Jamesy's shoulder to the table. Two steps she advanced, then she paused, with one diminutive foot upraised, the claws of it clenching and relaxing with emotion, her abstracted left eye on Julia, her excited right on the hat. . . . Jamesy drew a long breath. Spotty lowered her foot, took a slow hesitant step, and stood again at one-legged attention. A deft jump, a balancing wing momentarily outstretched, and she stood safe and steady on the hat brim. She peeped within. Her right eye ascertained that the interior was as roomy as any bantam could desire; her left made sure that it was clean, and comfortably, nay, luxuriously lined. The next moment Spotty had disappeared inside the hat. . . . Two interminable minutes they waited, with hearts that beat absurdly high. Then, as in a conjuring trick, Spotty appeared on the hat-brim, shook her ruffled feathers into composure, ogled her two friends simultaneously with two divergent glittering eyes, and remarked in tones of triumphant assurance: "Tuk-tuk-tuk-tuk-tra-a-aa-tuk!"

Together they rushed to the hat, and Jamesy's arm was about Julia's waist as they peeped within and beheld the tiniest, frailest, most delightful egg that ever mortal bantam laid.

So came reconciliation, and the solution of the difficulty of their first quarrel for Jamesy and Julia; and now the hat is only used by neighbours on the occasion of a wedding—neighbours, of course, who in turn occupy the urgent and honourable position of bridegroom.

Not one of these little sketches is dull, and nearly all of them touch the comical side of things, although the letters of Thyrsa, who was desirous of writing "potry" for the editor of a local paper, border at times on the pathetic. Thyrsa, however, did the sensible thing—married a strapping young fisherman who gave her no

encouragement so far as literature was concerned, but dowered her with a jolly baby and the joys of a cosy household. Mr. Lee has done well in merely suggesting the Cornish speech—had he tried strenuously to reproduce that inimitable music he would have spoiled his book; for in truth no arrangement of letters can give that cadence, that singing "lift" at the close of a sentence, which is so entrancing. Our readers should keep this delightful volume by them—they will want to dip into it again and again.

SHORTER REVIEWS

The King in Yellow. By ROBERT CHAMBERS. (Constable, 6s.)

MR. CHAMBERS is responsible for a lengthy list of novels, and is apparently content to take second or third place and to bid for popularity when he might achieve, judging from a portion of his work in this collection of short stories (noted as a re-issue), something really fine. For "The King in Yellow" and its dependant sketches, which give the book its title, we care nothing—indeed, they are simply sensational, and for the most part absurd fiction, which had better have been consigned to the friendly oblivion of magazine pages. But such little studies as "The Street of the Four Winds" and "Rue Barrée," strangely incongruous in such company, have the essence of true artistry, and compensate in a measure for the disappointment and the unconvincing horrors of the first hundred pages. Mr. Chambers can be exceedingly gruesome if he likes, and it is possible that some nervous people will shudder creepily and find it necessary to leave the bedroom light burning if they happen to read of the frightful little man with the false ears at an unwisely late hour.

"The Street of Our Lady of the Fields," and the other sketches of student life in Paris, are excellent, and if the author had only kept the whole of his stories on the level of these we should have found little comment but that of praise for his book. It seems to us a mistake, however, to have bound examples of two styles so very different between the same covers.

Concerning Himself. By VICTOR L. WHITECHURCH. (Unwin, 6s.)

MR. WHITECHURCH has given us here a story in the autobiographical manner, dealing in his usual interesting way with ecclesiastical matters. The hero, Gerald Sutton, recounts the chief events of his career from boyhood to the achievement of a small living in the country, and if there is nothing startling or even very remarkable in his development, the material of human affairs is displayed in an attractive style. His father, as irresponsible as "Roy Richmond," but not quite so honourable and courtly a personage, is cleverly drawn, but the uncle upon whose shoulders falls the burden of Gerald's education and support is rather more of an automaton than the author intended him to be, we fancy; his stiffness and his absorption in the interminable study of genealogies are not very convincing. We like the boy and girl, Alec and Maud Winter, who are very natural indeed, and who do not lose that characteristic when they arrive at the adult stage. Through the vicissitudes of a misplaced affection for the Squire of Frattenbury's daughter, Gerald passes safely to the final discovery that Maud and he were more suited for each other, and thus all ends happily. There are some capital glimpses at the inner life of a big theological college, and on the whole the book repays reading; but an author who can quote a scrap of Greek and drop into French should be more cautious to avoid such mistakes as "neither the Squire nor Violet were

at home"; also we really think he need not take such desperate pains to split his verbs—"to utterly abandon" and "to suddenly show" are a couple of unpleasant examples.

The Actress. By LOUISE CLOSSER HALE. (Constable, 6s.)

WE all, it is to be presumed, desire originality in the books we read, and in the hour or two spent with the sprightly little actress who is the heroine of this story hardly anybody will be disappointed. Miss Rhoda Miller, the lady in question, tells her adventures in the first person, and manages to attain an effect of familiarity which is piquant without becoming obtrusive or annoying. Starting as a fairly successful member of a New York company, the chance of her life comes with an offer to take one of the principal parts in a play to be staged in London; but she has a great friend, Aaron Adams, a broker, who is strongly set against the thought of the stage as a career for her. In fact, he presents to her in a charming spirit of *camaraderie* the attractions of domesticity, with himself as the "leading man." Rhoda, however, does not think she is in love with him, and at any rate the idea of captivating an English audience pulls too hard for resistance, so over here with the company she comes. Her hopes are realised—the play goes well, the Press is kind, and the public responds to every joke readily; the description of the state of mind of the actors on the first night is splendidly done. Then creeps in the spectre of loneliness, and at last Rhoda breaks down utterly, discovering that she has loved Aaron all the time, and believing, through specious evidence, that he has married a girl friend of hers. Aaron's arrival on the scene in London at the precise moment when he is most needed is a trifle too near the limits of probability, but that is the only fault we have to find with the book. The life of the stage, its friendships, jollities, disappointments, is admirably depicted, and with it all more than one little romance is outlined. The story is told in terse and very effective style, without any superabundance of the offensive and transitory slang terms which seem to be the only method known to some writers of indicating an American "atmosphere." A happy ending, as we have suggested, is conceded, and after the heartbreaking struggles of the heroine to conquer her loneliness and her nervous dread, we deserve it as much as she does.

Maurice Maeterlinck. By GERARD HARRY. (Paris: Charles Carrington, 2fr. 50c.)

WHAT delicate philosophy of life may eventually evolve itself from the gossamer speculations and mellifluous theorisings of M. Maeterlinck it is hardly yet possible to say, but, without going to the extremes of admiration which are affected by some of his compatriots and disciples, we may admit that the works of so calm an observer, so fine a thinker, so beautiful a writer, as he has shown himself to be, are worthy of a high regard in contemporary literature. In the little volume which has reached us from the Faubourg Montmartre no attempt is made to discuss Maeterlinck deeply, or to estimate with any exactness his position; it is merely a friendly portrayal of the man and his aims. It is, in fact, a trifle too obviously friendly to be considered as good criticism, even as far as it goes. Resemblances are mentioned as having been traced between Maeterlinck and Shakespeare, Marlowe, Webster, Poe, Baudelaire, Ibsen, which may or may not exist; in any case the labour of defining such affinities seems to us unnecessary. Maeterlinck is quite charming in his mystical wanderings among the flowers and the bees, quite competent to stand alone, and his work is so individual that comparisons are not of much use.

The text is adorned here and there with those gems of metaphor and allusion which seem brought to perfection only in the French language, and there is a very happy page comparing Maeterlinck to one of a company of travellers on an unknown journey by train, silent, apart, endeavouring by scrutiny of the flying country—"apparitions brusques, apparences fuyantes"—to ascertain his position and destination. "Quel mystère avons nous laissé derrière nous? Dans quel mystère entrerons-nous au bout de ce voyage d'un jour?"

A little prose sketch from the short-lived "Pleiade," dated 1886, is given at the close of the book, and some excellent reproductions of photographs complete this interesting little study of the Belgian writer.

ITALIAN BACKGROUNDS—II.

TWO GARDENS.

A DIM, mellow atmosphere, through which the swallows wheel and dip, swims over the closely cultivated fields, the flat-faced farms, the villas marked by the spearhead of a single cypress or the sable cloud which shows a congregation of them, the vine-ridged slopes, the ash-grey olives, the tall poplars, fantastically sharp against a background of hills which are here, not the bare and snow-scarred mountainous sort, but "the kind the early painters loved, the blue ones low and shapely, that we see as suitable backgrounds for Virgins and saints and angels in so many pictures, better loved than the overwhelming kind where Death and Morning walk."

The windless day is heavy with heat, the leaves of the hedgerows are so tender and sappy that their very essence seems to cool the air, to fall like a spray of water into the thirsty lanes, where the red-tasselled mules are driven by the dust-covered peasants. But within the grounds of the villa is the greenness of a watered garden, *Paradisi semper amoena virentia*. It is shaded by plantations where the filmy-winged moths are fluttering in the green light, above the tall, seeded grasses of the meadow blue with salvias, and gilt with branching buttercups, coloured with all the "cool, meek-blooded flowers" of the fields, while overhead white and rosy-flowered pyramidal chestnut trees and snowy acacias rustle down their honey-scented showers and wreck of white and red. A still, grey lake enclosed in a thicket, cooled by a slender drizzling fountain, and rimmed with rushes and tall grasses upon which a bloom-like mist lies thickly, has in its centre an island, which is a temple of the Nymphs, while, scattered about the garden is a profusion of *exedras* and semi-circular arbours of pink brick or pink-washed plaster. Galileo, a weather-stained Medicean Venus, the term of an indistinguishable emperor, stands forgotten among the rising wheat, or on the edge of the plantations, littered with falling blossom-scales and the fading petals of acacia and rose, while over the quiet precinct passes "a meadow gale of early spring which mingles the fragrance of all the flowers of the field," and the nightingales begin among the pyramidal chestnuts of the villa.

"What greater delight is there," writes an old author, "than to behold the earth apparelled with plants, as with a robe of embroidered work, set with orient pearls and garnished with great diversitie of rare and costlie jewels?" But the Puccini, the owners of the garden, were not living in the villa, but in their house in the streets of a town not many miles away. Only the dead Puccini, in their mausoleum in the most weed-grown and deserted portion of the garden—a mausoleum washed pink and daubed with a pitiful imitation of ornaments of black and white marble, guarded by a ridiculous and tottering *gardieu des morts*—know the dews and keep watch upon the promise of the gardens.

The Giusti garden, with its main walk an avenue of

dark cypresses, won the admiration of Goethe, both for its beautiful situation and for its monstrous trees, pointing like spikes into the air. "A tree," he writes, "whose branches, the oldest as well as the youngest, are striving to reach heaven—a tree which will last three hundred years is well worthy of veneration, and judging from the time when this garden was laid out, these trees have already attained that venerable age."

The garden is laid out in a series of terraces, like the garden of which Sir Henry Wootton writes, "for the mariner perchance incomparable," into which "the first Access was a high Walk like a Terrace, from whence might be taken a general view of the whole Plot below, but rather in a delightful confusion, than with any plain distinction of the pieces. From this, the Beholder, descending many steps, was afterwards conveyed again by several mountings and valings to various entertainments and of his scent and sight, which I shall not need to describe, for that were poetical; let me only note this, that every one of these diversities was as if he had been magically transported into a new garden."

In the Giusti garden, the lowest terrace is but a square and not very extensive plot full of parched flower-beds, in the midst of which stands a two-tiered fountain, with a weedy, rank-smelling basin, glazed by its dripping water, rimmed with a sharp golden light against the descending sun, and tenanted by one harsh-voiced frog. A terrace where the grass grows tall, where the grey midges are floating over the shimmering awns like many-coloured pollen, or winged and wandering seeds, is presided over by its weather-stained Nymphs, or garden deities. The sun is melting in his descent over the melting horizon; the pale wave-like serrations of the mountain-range are fading in the amber pool of light that surrounds him, where thin wisps and filaments of cloud idling motionless in the air are rimmed with a light as of fine brass, and between them lie yet more faint and extended webs of vaporous light, amber thistle-down, fine, evanescent, hardly more noticeable than the faint lines and pencillings of translucent horn. Sharply into the air rise the shafts and campaniles of the towered city, more sharply still the long drawn cypresses, dark as a blade of bronze, tapering to the height of the rocky back-wall of the steep garden.

The crescent of an unkindled moon hangs very high up in the paling sky, above the roofs of Verona, brown and grey like the irregular tesserae of some ruined Roman pavement, above the dusty and fragrant alleys of box, above the cypresses, above the upturned mirror of the grey Adige—so smooth, seen from afar, so tumultuous on nearer view as it washes round the old city walls.

The bloom of twilight falls upon the irregular roofs as the sun dips behind the blue bastions of a western cloud, where in a rent he kindles into a steady rosy light, like glowing charcoal. A little cool wind of evening rises and blows the leaves of the bronze-hued trees together, and blows the blackbird's mellow whistle and the hiss of the flying swallows about the steep garden, where the paths are littered with the dry and wrinkled blossoms of the once-honeyed acacia and laburnum. The trees sink into twilight, become sombre and formless. The light goes out from the mirror of the Adige. Suddenly the air overhead becomes filled with a shrill, confused noise from a numerous body of swallows, looking like a great swarm of gnats, small specks floating like the lees in a yellow wine, high up in the air, while a frog lifts his harsh, melancholy cry from the weedy basin of the fountain, and the *angelus*, with its plangent note of appeal, is rising from all the rolling bells of Verona, as if in lament for the flowery splendour and consummated glory of the year, "as thereafter immediately beginning to draw near its end, as the first yellow leaf crosses it, in the first severer wind."

M. J.

THE END OF JUNE

THE broad grey river, netted with variable wrinkles, fled away like a mill-race in mid-steam, bright with moving silver scars and scales of splintered light, spinning little dimpled maelstroms to the sides, and knocking against the grey stones of the bank, that are patched with brown moss. Over the expanse of its shining street, over the dry-tongued reed-beds, where the tall plumes are still high above the young green, numberless insects floating like flying blossoms—sulphur butterflies, bees droning their distant organ-notes, and pale insects involved in their own white blur of beating wings:

Out of the river issued living sparks
And on all sides sank down into the flowers.

The low, cool-rooted willows, with the sun filtering between their grey leaves, pale as the silver of gossamers, waver in the yielding air. Over all, many white clouds float like a thick curd within the blue bowl of the sky; and upon smooth, grayling-haunted pools where the shadowy unrealities seen on their shining glass are perhaps not less shadowy than the realities they mirror. The voice of the high-stationed lark comes to us enriched by the stream. To the north, one smoke-coloured cloud obscures one side of the bright sky with its veil, and upon it a double rainbow, so bright that its chorded colours seem printed by the eye upon the neighbouring continents of cloud, shines through the trickling rain. The smaller and more intense arc has an outer band of transparent flame-colour, separated from the inner rim of clear ice-green by a narrow interspace of melting yellow light. Between the span of this arch the rain trickles down upon the warm tree-muffled hills and field; here the beeches shine in the vivid light, here the odorous snow drips from the chestnut, and the hawthorn upon fields of uncrushed grass, where the moist breath of vapour is rising from the rushy bottoms and in blue upon the horns of the hills.

The succulent flowers in the meadow, the millions of hollow-globed dandelion docks, like some carved toy of laborious Orient ivory, the tall umbrells of cow-parsley, delicate as the powdery spray of a fountain, the branching gilt-flowered buttercups, the honey-breathed clover, low-growing speedwell and herb-robert, with many invisible "cool meek-blooded flowers," each lending its own peculiar fragrance to the moist wind, move continually in a wavering morrice above the grey and green grass, perfuming it with myrrh and frankincense, with all the powders of the merchant.

The sun, from beneath a blue cloud, pours his rayed water-carriers, regular as the pale amber sticks of a delicate fan, upon the heavy-headed elms, steeped in a film of blue, and upon an infinite distance built up of wet light and pale blue cloud-like forms of hill and plain. In the hedges the wreath of the hawthorn is pink and seared as if with a fiery breath, its fallen snow lying upon the ripe grasses, or blown this way and that by the gushes of the wet wind that passes over the meadow, smoothing it into evanescent grey furrows, like ripples rocking light upon the sea; so that the rich colour of the meadow, clouded and barred like the shining pelt of some wondrous animal, rich with the gold dust of buttercups, the warm brown of seeded grasses, the infinite variety of broken colours of indistinguishable flowers, wavers like the sea, suffering, like this, a perpetual change

Into something rich and strange.

In the wood a host of slender rods and brown-tipped croziers of the bracken are rising from the warm, ruddy soil, above the fading blue-bells, between larches bearing on their languid branches a heavy weight of tiny cones, rosy and brown. The wood is filled with the

vibration of many bees, the drone of wasps, the thinner murmur of innumerable hovering flies, the noise, perhaps, that Richard Jefferies knew when the sunlight strikes the resonant harp of the earth; while louder still, from beyond the wood, the cornrake is heard, calling harshly to his mate among the green corn; and the wood pigeon among the heavy-headed elms summons to an eternal sleep.

Upon the floor of the wood the sunlight lies in moving discs of gold, irregular patches of gold leaf, bars of freckled light between the shadeless larches, upon the open rides leading to the motey distance, where the tall masks of the pines, with their drooping banner-like boughs, are so close together as to make a "concentrated light, a light quite special, meaning enclosure, almost sanctuary, in which all colour takes a solemn vividness," the redness of the beech leaves on the ground, the green of knotted moss, and of beech saplings. Here the "chapels' lone desire" in the many-aisled woods look as though they were intended to hold some holy relic and brood over it, in the green sanctuary light where the long-drawn flowers shine strangely, like votive-candles before some bright reliquary.

MEETINGS OF SOCIETIES

LINNEAN SOCIETY OF LONDON.

GENERAL MEETING.

17TH JUNE, 1909.

SIR FRANK CRISP, Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Minutes of the General Meeting of the 3rd June, 1909, were read and confirmed.

Mr Thomas Parkin, M.A., was proposed as a Fellow. Mr. William Booth Waterfall, Mrs. Mary Jane Longstaff, Mr. Richard Williams Harold Row, and Mr. William Robert Price, B.A. Cantab., were admitted Fellows.

Mr. William Dinnis and Mr. Edward John Woodhouse, B.A. Cantab., were elected Fellows.

A letter congratulating Sir Joseph Hooker on his approaching 92nd birthday was read from the Chair, and signed by the Fellows present.

The first paper was by Mr. J. G. Otto Tepper, F.L.S., "On the Growth of a species of *Battarea*," and was, in the absence of the author, read in title.

A paper by Sir John Murray, K.C.B., F.R.S., F.L.S.—"The Deposits in the Indian Ocean"—was epitomised by Mr. J. Stanley Gardiner, F.R.S., F.L.S., and spoken to by Mr. H. W. Monckton, Dr. Longstaff (Visitor), and Prof. Dendy, Sec.L.S.

Mr. L. A. Borradaile read his paper, communicated by Mr. J. Stanley Gardiner—"The 'Sealark' Penaeidea, Stenopidea, and Reptantia"; upon which Mr. J. Stanley Gardiner added some remarks.

The third paper on results from the same Expedition, also similarly communicated, was by Mr. T. Bainbrigge Fletcher—"The 'Sealark' Lepidoptera"; a discussion followed, in which the Rev. T. R. R. Stebbing, Prof. Dendy, and Dr. Longstaffe engaged.

Mr. R. W. Harold Row, F.L.S., explained the chief points of his paper, entitled "Report on the Porifera collected by Mr. C. Crossland in the Red Sea—Part I. Calcareae," which was followed by remarks from Prof. Dendy in illustration.

Mr. T. A. Sprague, F.L.S., and Mr. J. Hutchinson contributed a paper on "The African Species of *Triumfetta*, Linn.," with lantern slides. Mr. G. E. Baker expressed his satisfaction at this much-needed revision.

The remaining papers were taken as read, in the absence of the authors:—Dr. H. Christ, "New Species of Malesian and Philippine Ferns," communicated by Mr. C. G. Matthew, F.L.S.; and Mr. A. W. Hill, F.L.S., on "The acaulescent species of *Malvastrum*, A. Gray."

PHYSICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

PROCEEDINGS AT THE MEETING HELD JUNE 11TH, 1909.

DR. C. CHREE, F.R.S., President, in the Chair.

A paper by Dr. Russell and Mr. Arthur Wright on "The Arthur Wright Electrical Device for evaluating Formulæ and solving Equations," was read by Dr. Russell. In this device special slide resistances are used. If R be the resistance of one of these and a metallic finger make contact with it at a point where the scale reading is x , the resistance between this finger and the terminal of the slide is R/x . The scales of the slides are graduated logarithmically as in the ordinary slide-rule. Hence the processes of multiplication and division can be done mechanically by sliding them against exactly similar fixed scales. If we connect a number of these slide resistances in parallel, since the current is inversely proportional to the resistance, the sum of the currents through them will be proportional to the sum of the readings of the contact fingers. We can easily balance by a null method this current against the current going through a single slide resistance X by means of a Wheatstone's bridge arrangement. In this case the reading on X when there is a balance gives the sum of the readings on all the other slides. Similarly we can subtract numbers by putting slides representing these numbers in parallel with X and then obtain a balance by altering the reading on X . It is also shown how the variable arms of the bridge can be usefully employed in making the calculations.

By clamping the contact fingers inclined at certain angles to a rod which can be moved at right angles to the slides, it is easy to obtain the values on X of $f(x)$ when

$$f(x) = ax^m + bx^n + cx^p + \dots,$$

where the indices m, n, p, \dots may be positive, negative, or fractional, and the coefficients may be positive or negative numbers. In particular if the reading on X be zero when x is x_1 then x_1 is a root of the equation $f(x) = 0$.

A model of this device for solving an equation of any degree consisting of not more than four terms was shown. In this model the slide resistances are fixed on a rigid framework and the contact fingers are wires which can be fixed at any desired angles $\cot^{-1} m, \cot^{-1} n, \cot^{-1} p$ with the slides, where m, n , and p are the indices of the powers of x in the equation. A few dry cells and a lecture-table galvanometer were employed. Moving the framework until there is no deflection of the galvanometer, the pointer attached to it indicates at once a root of the equation. The inaccuracy of the results found by means of this model is of the order of one per cent. It is explained how approximate values of the imaginary roots of numerical equations can be found by the device. It is also explained how it can be employed to solve very complicated equations. It is shown, for instance, that a device with four slide resistances like the model exhibited can be used to find approximate values of the roots of numerical equations of the form

$$a/x^m + b/f(x) = cx^n + dF(x),$$

when the values of $f(x)$ and $F(x)$ have been computed or found experimentally for various values of x . The same device also can be used to find the approximate values of x which satisfy the equation

$$a_1 I_1^{bx} + a_2 I_2^{bx} + a_3 I_3^{bx} + a_4 I_4^{bx} = 0$$

when the numerical values of the constants are known.

Prof. C. H. Lees expressed his interest in the device and referred to the large number of calculations that could be performed with it.

Dr. W. H. Eccles congratulated the authors, and referring to the fact that the machine could be used to solve a bi-quadratic, asked if it was possible to determine the two quadratic factors by means of it.

A paper on "The Echelon Spectroscope, its secondary action and the structure of the green mercury line" was read by Mr. H. Stansfield. The paper describes an investigation of the action of an echelon spectroscope and the results obtained as to the structure of the green mercury line given by an Arons lamp. The echelon spectroscope employed was arranged so that the auxiliary prism could be mounted next to the echelon. The dispersion of the prism may be added to, or subtracted from, the dispersion of the echelon, and the change of four per cent. in the dispersion thereby obtained gives a method of determining whether two lines in the spectrum belong to the same order. The theory of the primary action of the echelon in the reversed position, when the light leaves by the largest plate, is compared with the theory of the echelon in the usual position. Fabry and Perot spectra are produced by the secondary action of the echelon, that is by the reflection of light at the surfaces of the plates. When the echelon is tilted the twice reflected or secondary light may be separated from the primary and parts of the Fabry and Perot circles observed with a wide slit. The secondary light also undergoes the primary echelon treatment, and, with a narrow slit, is confined to the points of intersection of the two systems of spectra, giving spectra similar to those obtained by Gehrcke and Baeyer by crossing two plane-parallel plates, a single wave-length being represented by a point in each order and a short continuous spectrum by a line. When the echelon is in the ordinary position, the secondary spectra are lines similar to the primary echelon lines and may be observed moving across the broad central line when the echelon table is slowly rotated; they show up much more clearly on the continuous background of the spectrum of the green line given by a hot quartz lamp. The results as to the structure of the green line are compared with other echelon results, and with those published by Gehrcke and Baeyer. The agreement between the independent methods, as to the number and position of the components, is now fairly close.

Dr. Lees referred to the importance of the secondary action, and asked the author if it was now possible to say definitely whether a line observed in an echelon spectrum is genuine or is produced by the instrument.

The author said that Gehrcke and Baeyer had hoped to supply the means of settling doubts of this kind when they eliminated the ghosts from their green line spectrum by their method of "interference points." Since then, however, two faint lines had been added to the list of components. With the possible exception of one faint line agreement had now been arrived at between two independent methods.

A paper entitled "The proposed International Unit of Candle Power" was read by Mr. C. C. Paterson. The paper discusses the units of Candle Power at present officially accepted in Great Britain, France, the United States of America, and Germany. The numerous intercomparisons which have taken place during the past five years between these units show that the candle, as interpreted in France, Great Britain, and the United States respectively, has practically the same value in the three countries. The authorities in the gas and electric interest in the United States are prepared to adjust their units of candle power to bring them to a single value, which is to be the same as the British and French units. The paper gives the results of comparisons showing that within the limits of experimental error the British and French units are identical. The change involved in the unit at present maintained at the Bureau of Standards, Washington, is shown to be 1.6 per cent.

The agreement thus established forms the subject of an official memorandum from the National Physical Laboratory (with the concurrence of the Metropolitan Gas Referees), the Bureau of Standards, Washington, and the Laboratoire Centrale, Paris. The proposal to call the common unit of light to be maintained jointly by the National Standardising Laboratories of America, France, and Great Britain the "International Candle" has been submitted to the International Electrotechnical Commission, and through it to all the countries of the world which are represented on that Commission. The Hefner unit is shown to be almost exactly $\frac{1}{10}$ ths of the new unit. The comparisons between the units have been made by two methods:—(1) The direct comparisons of the flame standards in France, Germany and Great Britain. (2) Through the medium of electric sub-standards which have had values assigned to them in the National Laboratories of the four countries. The agreement between the ratio values by the two methods is very close, and is shown by a table giving the results of the various comparisons which have been made.

A paper on "Inductance and Resistance in Telephone and other Circuits" was read by Dr. J. W. Nicholson. A general formula for the effective inductance of a circuit consisting of two long parallel wires has been given by the author, and is suitable for cases in which the current distribution in either wire is greatly affected by the frequency of alternation. In the present paper certain important cases are examined in detail, and formulæ are obtained capable of immediate use. A calculation of the effective resistance is also made in each case. Attention has been mainly directed to that of the simple telephone circuit, in which the leads are not twisted round each other in order to annul the inductive effects of the earth and of neighbouring circuits. Throughout the investigation only iron and copper wires as the two extreme cases are considered. The large permeability of iron completely changes the character of the effect of frequency on its self-induction, as compared with other metals. To all metals greatly used in practice, except iron, the formulæ developed for copper wires may be applied with a nearly identical order of accuracy.

A "Note on Terrestrial Magnetism" by Mr. G. W. Walker, and a paper by Mr. A. Eagle, "On the Form of the Pulses constituting full Radiation or White Light," were taken as read.

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

ABSTRACT OF THE PROCEEDINGS.

JUNE 15TH, 1909.

DR. A. SMITH WOODWARD, F.R.S., Vice-President, in the Chair.

Mr. H. W. Unthank, F.Z.S., exhibited a skull of *Sphenodon* with two bones on each side in the nasal region, and made the following remarks:—"In place of the usual single nasal on each side there appear to be two bones, one near the median line, the other more external, the line of division running from before backwards. On sawing across the middle of the nasal region the anterior part of the median pair of bones came away with the premaxillæ and vomers, leaving the external bones *in situ*. These show bevelled inner edges where they were slightly overlapped by the median bones, so that the surface-marking is that of a suture in the middle of what is usually a single nasal bone."

The Secretary exhibited the ears of an Elephant shot by Mr. Sutton Timmis, F.Z.S., on the Guaso Ngishu Plateau, east of Mt. Elgon, B. E. Africa.

Mr. J. C. White, C.I.E., C.M.Z.S., exhibited photographs of a young living specimen of a Takin (*Budorcas taxicolor whitei*) from Ghassa, N.W. Bhutan. The photographs had been taken on board ship at Calcutta

and the animal was to be presented to the Society. The Secretary added that he had ascertained that the Takin had reached Genoa in good condition and might be expected at the Gardens about June 21st. It was the first Takin that had reached Europe alive.

On behalf of Mr. R. Lydekker, the Secretary exhibited photographs of a spotted bull Tsaine or Bantian, shot by Mr. Arthur Porter in the great forest of Siam in November, 1908, which Mr. Lydekker proposed provisionally to name *Bos sondaicus porteri*.

Mr. Oldfield Thomas, F.R.S., F.Z.S., exhibited specimens of a new Rat which had been obtained by Mr. G. C. Shortridge during the Society's collecting expedition to Central America. It was distinguished as follows:—

Otodylomys guatemalæ, sp. n.

Considerably larger than *O. phyllotis*, greyer in colour, and with the feet parti-coloured, as in some species of *Tylomys*.

Head and body 170 mm.; tail 161; hind foot 28; skull 40.7.

Hab. Tucuru, Guatemala. *Type.* B. M. No. 9.6.11.13.

Dr. F. Wood Jones, F.Z.S., gave a demonstration, illustrated by specimens, models, and lantern slides, of the method of formation of coral islands and reefs.

The purpose of the demonstration was to show that the theories of subsidence put forward by Darwin, and of solution put forward by Sir John Murray, were both untenable in the light of actual facts to be observed on coral islands.

A fresh hypothesis—that sedimentation is the most important factor—was substituted for these theories; and it was pointed out that the atoll was in reality a structure analogous to the Porites colonies the upper surfaces of which were made basin-shaped by sediment obliterating the zooids of their central area.

That the deposition of sediment below the "limiting line of sedimentation" probably accounted for the bathymetrical limit of the reef-building corals, and for the formation of sedimentation banks up to that line.

That in the making of the atoll from the basin-shaped reef the winds and the waves played the greatest part, and that atoll lagoons tended to shoal owing to the deposition of sediment within them.

That Le Conte in 1856 had said that barrier reefs stood out from shore because they were limited on one side by the depth and on the other by the muddiness of the water, and that his pronouncement accorded with every known fact.

That the question of the formation of coral structures was a zoological one and was to be solved by a study of the living zooid and that the chief agent inimical to the growth of the zooid was the deposition of sediment.

Dr. R. Broom, C.M.Z.S., exhibited an unborn foetus of *Chrysochloris hottentota* and two young specimens of *C. asiatica*, one probably only a couple of days old, and made some remarks on the habits and life-history of the Cape Moles. Dr. Broom also exhibited the skulls of two South African fossil reptiles, *Lycosuchus vanderiet* and *Bauria cynops*, the former being the most perfect Therocephalian skull yet discovered.

Dr. R. Broom, C.M.Z.S., presented a paper "On the Organ of Jacobson in *Orycteropus*."

Orycteropus has a long narrow organ of Jacobson which opens into the naso-palatine canal. The arrangement of the cartilages is quite different from the type found in the higher Eutheria, and there is also a marked difference from the arrangement in *Dasypus*. The general structure comes nearest to that of the Marsupials, though there are a number of striking differences.

Mr. F. E. Beddard, M.A., F.R.S., F.Z.S., communicated a paper entitled "On some Points in the

Structure of the Lesser Anteater (*Tamandua tetradactyla*), with a note on the Cerebral Arteries of *Myrmecophaga*."

Dr. W. T. Calman, F.Z.S., presented a paper "On Decapod Crustacea from Christmas Island, collected by Dr. C. W. Andrews, F.R.S., F.Z.S."

A paper was received from Mr. H. L. Hawkins, communicated by Dr. F. A. Bather, F.R.S., F.Z.S., on "An Abnormal Individual of the Echinoid *Amblyneustes*."

Mr. Stanley Kemp, B.A., presented a paper, communicated by Dr. W. T. Calman, F.Z.S., entitled "The Decapods of the Genus *Gennadas* collected by H.M.S. *Challenger*."

The Secretary, Dr. P. Chalmers Mitchell, F.R.S., presented a paper entitled "Notes on a Young Walrus (*Odobæus rosmarus*) recently living in the Society's Gardens," and exhibited a sketch made from the living animal by Mr. Carton Moore-Park, F.Z.S.

A paper was received from Mr. R. H. Burne, M.A., F.Z.S., entitled "Notes on the Viscera of a Walrus (*Odobæus rosmarus*)."

CORRESPONDENCE

ROBERT BURNS.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—My curiosity as to "Scrutator's" notion of Burns's "pride of place" was due to his accusation that I was doing what in me lay to bring him down from it. I am not surprised that he cannot answer my question, but that I had reasons for my curiosity will be admitted when I explain that in the book I affirm that "amid all that he borrows and utilises Burns only the more strongly manifests his own great and magic individuality," that I state that in his treatment of the old songs he "gives, perhaps, even more striking indications than in his longer poems of his own marvellous poetic vitality and of sure natural endowments as a poetic artist," that I describe "The Jolly Beggars" as one of the most remarkable productions "in the whole range of poetic creation" and equally great as "a poetic *tour de force* and a dramatic triumph," that I refer to "Holy Willie's Prayer" as "an artistic triumph achieved by dexterous touches almost concealed by the subtle art of the satirist," to "Tam O' Shanter" as "a marvellously vivid piece of description," and to "Halloween" as "one of the pleasantest pictures of an old-world peasant interior with which," etc., etc., "ever depicted by poet." There is, of course, much more to quote, and whatever the demerits of these remarks as criticism, there is surely sufficient praise in them to glut the appetite of the most ravenous Burnsites. Yet "Scrutator" has the effrontery to accuse me of almost ignoring the merits of Burns and "laboriously magnifying" his faults. He even affirms that those who read my pages may actually turn "to seek higher ridges of Parnassus in the company of Allan Ramsay, Hamilton of Gilbertfield, and Robert Fergusson"—this notwithstanding such statements as the following: "his [Burns's] poetic flame burns much brighter than that at which it was kindled"; "even his parodies far surpass the originals"; "partly a parody of 'Leith Races,' the 'Holy Fair' is infinitely superior to it in vividness and virility," etc., etc. True, I do not rank "The Cotter's Saturday Night" with his greater masterpieces, and I also affirm that his experiments as "a hesitating and inapt disciple of the English school" do not count in any proper estimate of him as a poet, and if this is what "Scrutator" means by bringing down Burns from his "pride of place," then I, shamelessly, plead guilty to the charge.

It is all very well for "Scrutator" to seek now to climb down from the high and mighty altitude—if I may say so, the "pride of place"—of his first letter by protesting that "it is open to say that he [that is, I] and his collaborator thought, and that he still thinks, the poet overrated, and that they together and he, at his own hand, decided to see whether or not it were possible to give him his true position in the poetical ranks." It is not open to "Scrutator" to say what I think unless I tell him what I think; and I should never dream of making a general announcement in the least resembling that which "Scrutator" puts, if not into my mouth, into my thoughts; but in any case

this is not what "Scrutator" originally thought it "open to say." This peeping, cheeping, or chirping note of dissatisfaction can hardly be termed a faint echo of the previous swelling and alarming bugle call: "It seems imperative on the part of everyone who respects English literature and is jealous of its foremost representatives in the council of the nations to enter a strong protest when manifest injustice is done among foreigners by one of themselves." "Mr. Henderson," now says "Scrutator," "need not expect that their combined performance or his own individual experiment should command universal assent." But I never expected this—no more than I expect that "Scrutator" by taking upon him to write "in the name of everyone who respects English literature"—or as the lord of the Universe—will secure very much assent to his protest. What the opinions about the poems of Burns are that command "universal assent" "Scrutator" apparently knoweth; I do not; and I have also yet to learn that the justice of literary criticism is to be determined by the count of heads. In reviewing "The Centenary Burns" in THE ACADEMY, the late Mr. Francis Thompson expressed the opinion that Mr. Henley was inclined to estimate too highly the gifts of Burns as "an absolute poet." He did not convince Mr. Henley, but I know that Mr. Henley fully recognised the sincerity and force of Mr. Thompson's criticism; he understood what it meant; he realised that the temperament and point of view of Mr. Thompson differed from his, and he never thought of accusing him of doing what in him lay "to bring down Burns from his pride of place." Mr. Henley's opinions and my opinions were published simply as our own; we did not assume the imperial authority of the anonymous "Scrutator"; we did not pretend to speak for the universe, or even for "everyone who respects English literature."

"Scrutator's" remarks on my examples of the allusions of Burns to Nature are quite misleading. I prefaced them by stating that they "find their place in his verse and colour his language almost without conscious effort." The example selected by "Scrutator" from Byron proves the very opposite of what he intends. Burns simply depicts the moonlight scene in its objective beauty; he could not have written the subjective "hallowing tree and tower"; and if I might presume to parody the opening paragraph of "Scrutator's" letter, I should be inclined to say that a "casual commentator" who cannot discern the poetical difference between the two examples "makes further discussion hopeless."

"Scrutator" does not deny that "let alone" is the common English equivalent for the Scottish or colloquial "let be," nor that his poetical quotations there anent were as ludicrously malapropos as I affirmed them to be. As to "cheep," he now affirms that I ought to have said that "chirp" as well as "peep" is an equivalent, if only to guard against "imminent ambiguity." But had I done so, the ambiguity would have been actual, not merely imminent, for "peep" like "cheep" refers specially to the cry of young birds, and "chirp" does not. Gamekeepers—if not noblemen—with guns on their shoulders, refer, for example, to young grouse as "cheepers," never as "chirpers."

T. F. HENDERSON.

BUNKUM.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—There is a Year Book published in London and intended apparently to guide young aspirants to free lance fame, which is more noticeable for the unconscious humour of its pages than for the utility of the information in them; albeit from the manner of the preface it seems as though the publishers thought otherwise. It boasts a bright red cover, but of its identity I say no more.

Turning first to the latter portion of this invaluable work, we find a list of American journals and magazines with descriptions, some long and some short, as to the kind of matter they require. Where the information really comes from it is impossible to say, but here are some specimens which, if typical of our Yankee cousins, God help 'em!

Argosy: "Adventure tales most desired. Themes barred are the woes of wronged women and divorced couples, also tales based on newspaper anecdotes."

Compare with this the following:

Ten Story Book: "All short fiction. Every kind of short story printable may be accepted. Prefers love, passion, humour, "Frenchy," or suggestive tales inside the line of decency."

Then again:

Short Stories: "All fiction. No healthy theme barred, only the indelicate, salacious, and yellow press dramas."

Compared with:

Young's Magazine: "Prefers bright, risqué, spicy stories. Authors are urged to study the magazine before contributing."

What all-round fellows they are across the pond! There is, too, a candour about these editorial hints (if such they are) which just licks creation, as witness:

People's Home Journal: "Payment low and varying"—while

People's Magazine (edited, by the way, by a Mr. Moses), wants:

"Stories of criminal classes, but not the cheap, trite tales written in new Bowery dialect."

And what about this?

Pacific Monthly: "Eschews the morbid and neurotic. Office is slow in acceptance of MSS., but exceeding courteous."

What in heaven's name does it all mean?

Broadway Magazine: Like many another lacking the courage of its convictions, "bars sex problems," while

The Delineator desires "the best little stories that are written," and wishes it may get them—cheap! And

Mother's Magazine strikes a highly original note by describing itself as "exclusively for mothers and would-be mothers, not necessarily U.S.A.—bright, vivacious, and bracing."

In conclusion it is only fair to add that the only person I ever knew who acted upon the advice of this weird publication received a courteous reply from the U.S.A. stating that the Editor was not responsible for the information published, and in fact, desired "copy" of exactly the opposite nature!

Yet it is not only the American end of the book that appeals to one's sense of the picturesque, for even our British journals have their happy (or unhappy) moments. For instance, the

Burlington Magazine: "Cannot accept MSS. compiled from works of reference." While the

Halfpenny Comic calls loudly for "sensational jokes." Why, too, does

Home Chat go out of its way to say that its stories need be "not necessarily of intense love interest"? And

Yes or No that it will take: "tales of adventure, crime, humour, or love," when it would have been so much simpler to say "takes anything"?

But one might go on *ad infinitum*, were it not for stress of space, so I will conclude with what is probably the gem of the book—the limit of droll, libellous sarcasm on the part of somebody or other.

Pluck: "Carmelite House, E.C. A magazine for boys. Established by Messrs. Harmsworth, and provides healthy boys' yarns against the pernicious factor of the penny and half-penny papers!"

After which—good-night.

M.S.

"CLEARNESS" IN PROSE.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—Your interesting correspondent, "A French Linguist," and one or two other writers in your last issue, raise the question of clearness in prose, and it is generally regarded as the chief beauty in style. There are one or two considerations dominating this question which, so far as I know, have been overlooked by writers on style in literature.

The writer who is clear to all readers is working on a very low and commonplace plane of thought. A writer may express a profound idea in most fitting terms, but he will be clear only to the few who have glimpsed the thought for themselves, or are mentally prepared for it; other readers will impute their own confusion of thought to the writer. Those "clear" and bright sentences which are regarded as the perfection of style may, quite unintentionally, be utterly misleading. They express bright and clear but narrow conceptions, those petty fragments of truth which set men quarrelling. They are those *ex parte* statements which are so demoralising in the political Press.

From the philosophical standpoint it is seen that every fact is rooted in infinity; every event is a moment in an endless chain of cause and effect, all things are interwoven in the warp and the woof of the "garment of God" by which we see Him, as Goethe has it. So we cannot isolate anything in thought to get a clear conception of it without falsifying it to some extent. We do as the artist does who puts a sharp and clear outline round his objects, which make them as untrue to Nature as the stained glass saints are with their leaded outlines! Clearness of conception is needed for clearness of expression, and only the smaller things can be clearly conceived, and they are falsified in the process. So the clearest writers are necessarily both false

and shallow. This is seen instantly if we look at the matter from the painter's standpoint instead of the writer's.

The problem, then, for the writer as well as for the painter, is the means by which things which have been "clearly" described and emphasised, and to that extent isolated, can be restored to their right setting as part of a stupendous whole, and to their right relations. Here the artist steps in, and clearness is only part of his aim. Clearness belittles, deprives things of their atmosphere; so the true aim is to give the truth of impression, and to suggest infinitely more than he can say. The writer who gives me a new thought is my benefactor, but the man who stimulates me to think a new thought for myself is doubly my benefactor. So stimulating suggestiveness, in literature as fine art, is of higher value than clearness.

The mind should be so stimulated as to arouse into activity those transcendent faculties which rise above time and space, and give us glimpses of that larger, that cosmic consciousness towards which we are slowly ascending. This is done by appealing to the sense of beauty; by beauty of statement our words are enriched with an emotional accompaniment giving them a double appeal, as the soul is stirred by music enriching the words of a song. When the soul soars it is in touch of the larger realities, and the facts presented to it will be seen or felt in their larger relations, and a higher order of truth is attained. So the great prose writer is virtually a poet in sight and feeling, and he tends to merge into the prophet.

I have only hinted one aspect of a many-sided truth, but hints suffice for the wise. Of course, I have no word for the unskilled sciolist who cannot make himself clear on the lower planes of thought; my contention is that before condemning a writer for obscurity we should be quite sure that we can rise to his standpoint. Then we should be sure of his aim; he may be content to stuff us with the food of facts and sauce of comment; or he may be trying to jolt us out of our ruts, and to stimulate our own mental activity, and lack of clearness may be on the side of the reader, and not on the writer's part. Setting aside faults in technical construction, I should say that the absolutely clear is either small or commonplace, and it is by keeping thought on these lower planes that we set men quarrelling when they should be co-operating.

E. WAKE COOK.

GEORGE MEREDITH'S "GENIUS."

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—It is my humble opinion, and, I believe, the opinion of those who understand literature, that George Meredith, even though dead, has not yet "come to his own." Your correspondent, Mr. Ridley, will perhaps, therefore, pardon me when I deplore his letter, published in your issue of the 19th of this month, which appears to contain an expression of the average person's point of view *plus* a statement that Meredith's poetry is greater than his prose. Mr. Ridley finds in "Richard Feverel" nothing better than "admirable diction, biting sarcasm, graceful portrayal, and mournful pessimism." I will not insult a correspondent of yours by pretending to believe that he imagines he is adopting a novel and interesting attitude by saying this, but I should like to remind him that there was no need to say it; 90 per cent. of those who have read the book have already said it; surely it is a pity for these to be encouraged in their misunderstanding. In another passage Mr. Ridley uses the terms "confused" and (with reference to "The Egoist") "chaotic," which strike me as terms one would have expected from a schoolgirl just beginning to read, not from a person of Mr. Ridley's eminent understanding.

Mr. Ridley will not care to know what I find in "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel," but may I ask him to fetch out his Stevenson?—Stevenson, the seeker after, the lover of clearness, if ever there was one in this world. If he will do so and will read through "Across the Plains" he will discover, in a certain later essay, what "R. L. S." found in the first meeting of Lucy with Richard. Somehow I do not think that Stevenson (the seeker after the right word) would have endorsed "confused" with reference to the art of a man, the consideration of whom suggested to him the name "Shakespeare." Would not "a stumbling-block to babes" have been a better phrase?

Mr. Ridley says that Meredith "could never shake off his obsessing ego, or, like Dickens . . . lose himself entirely in the characters of his creation." Could he not? Did he not, in "The Adventures of Harry Richmond"? I admit that he did not in "Beauchamp's Career," but did he not, in—yes, even in "The Egoist"? There is a story that on the publication of "The Egoist" a young man rushed wildly to Meredith and said, "It's me! I'm The Egoist." Meredith replied, "So am

I. So is every man." Surely to criticise oneself one must shake off one's ego, hold it at arm's length and laugh at it. I do not think that Meredith will be found to have been the one obsessed.

I am very glad that Mr. Ridley admits "... the lamented novelist was a gifted and accomplished writer." Such praise is good indeed. But he also writes "... so dark was he, that none but professed ... devotees to the occult could pretend to interpret his actual meaning, or to proclaim his precise 'gospel.'" I do not want to be rude, but is Mr. Ridley really referring to Meredith? Has he not made a mistake in the name, intending some other one? "Dark?" Meredith, more than all, was a painter with light colours. He was a writer of brilliant comedy; he abhorred the dark; look how, even in "The Ordeal," he could not confine himself to gloom. "Devotees to the occult"! Does Mr. Ridley refer to "The Shaving of Shagpat," or perhaps to Mrs. Berry? But it is necessary to be serious. I hope, sir, that there are other points in Mr. Ridley's letter on which you do not agree with your correspondent. Permit me to close with the suggestion—trite enough to you, but possibly helpful to Mr. Ridley—that Meredith's gospel is the gospel of sanity, of courage, of the bright duty of youth; and that it is only by realising that the great novelist was not "more concerned about the manner of delivery of his 'message' than about its actual delivery" that one can understand that message. Mr. Ridley has not understood the meaning of the mission; he therefore concludes that there is none.

LEONARD INKSTER.

FLAUBERT AND ST. GERTRUDE.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—I have been reading with interest the letter which appeared under the above heading in your last week's issue.

Your correspondent touches on some view of Flaubert as typical of the active seeker after the "fit" word, and of St. Gertrude as symbolising, as it were, the faculty of immediate and vivid apprehension. It has occurred to me that perhaps the writer's thought has been dominated by symbolism further than he realised, or, at least, more than is immediately apparent. I mean in regard to the choosing of a woman as contrast to a man in the complementary functions of selecting and of passively appreciating. Whether purposed or not, I think the point is suggestive. A woman by her very nature spends how much of her life in an attitude of waiting, listening as it were! There is something in the soul of a woman that is attuned to expectancy, to the sitting quiet with folded hands and hushed breath and ear quick to discern the distant footfall. With what quiet of concentration does a woman wait to hear how you will say her name, how alert is she to catch the most delicate of even unconscious inflections! And, too, is it not the things that must be said quietly that most appeal to her, that she is ever the most anxious to hear? Mary, sitting "awed" in her "white bed" (pictured with what sense of quietude by Rossetti!), is typical of the attitude of woman in so much of her real, her inner life. And so in the quick apprehension of the "fit" word, there is already there a naive aptitude by her very nature. A woman's ear is quick to detect the delicate subtleties in words, to catch the implication, to feel, as with some sort of immediate sense, the light and colour, laughter, sadness, tears in them. She is trained to a sense of the value of delicate suggestion—witness her rooms—the pot-pourri on the table by the bedside—the lavendered chests for cambrics and laces. And in words the same trained instinct has a sort of immediate, pleasurable consciousness of the individual fragrances of those things that give to a word its distinction and personal grace. Thus perhaps might St. Gertrude be taken to stand for a further symbolism, for the receptivity of all women, their power of recognising, of responding to the fit word. For is it not typically woman's peculiar privilege to listen—to hear the "word" spoken as in the stillness of dawn—and to respond, with eyes alive with the joy of the full meaning, "Ecce Ancilla . . . "?

AMY FITZMORRIS.

June 22nd, 1909.

HIGH POINTING.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—A French Linguist, whose comments on "knotty points" of English grammar I find interesting and suggestive, seems to think that some writers are too sparing in the use of the comma. Not being an authority on the subject,

I do not venture to offer any opinion on the general question, but I believe I am correct in saying that in one part of his last letter your correspondent has erred in inserting a comma where none ought to appear. (I assume that he is responsible for the punctuation, though it has been frequently stated that compositors take that matter into their own hands.)

Here is the passage referred to:—"The English orators, whom I have hitherto heard in London, generally stopped for a second or two after the adverbial phrase," etc.

This might be taken to mean that all English orators "generally stopped," etc., whereas, of course, the writer meant the remark to apply only to those of them he had heard in London. No doubt the word "hitherto" should be taken into account by the reader, but had there been no comma after "orators" the meaning would have been quite plain, even though "hitherto" had been left out as well. It is unmistakably a case where the adjective clause should be in the restrictive, not in the co-ordinating form; and according to Bain's "Higher English Grammar" (1879 edition), page 337, "A restrictive adjective clause is not separated by a comma from the noun."

Bain, in this instance, would probably have preferred the relative pronoun "that" to "whom," so as to add to the restrictive force of the clause, "The English orators that I have heard," etc. Many writers, again, would dispense with the pronoun in any form in such a case.

I am, etc.,

W. C. M.

June 23rd, 1909.

WILKIE COLLINS AND MR. LE QUEUX.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—Mr. Le Queux is quite right. I am one "who has apparently never handled pearls of great price"—unless, indeed, the thumbing of a sample or so of Mr. Le Queux's amazing fictions may be so described. Like Mr. Le Queux himself I am by way of being "a literary gent," and I am content to leave the "handling" of pearls to—the pawnbrokers. But, perhaps, I may be permitted to handle a correspondence in my own little way.

It has taken a considerable time to draw Mr. Le Queux. And even now that he has stooped to take up the challenge thrown down to him in your columns he does not appear to have got us any "forrarder." For my letter at which he makes a feint was but supplementary to a communication published in THE ACADEMY so long ago as April last. Therein Mr. Le Queux was invited to make good his statement that he was an "old friend" of Wilkie Collins. In my, more recently published, letter I ventured to add an expression of my own scepticism regarding the existence of any such old friendship, and I proceeded to quote from an experience of Mr. Le Queux's, recently published in *Printer's Pie*, as illustrating the fact that the author of it is prone to the imagination of vain things, and that, on the whole, he takes himself rather too seriously.

In his comments on the communications of "N. N." and myself, Mr. Le Queux makes no reference whatever to his alleged friendship with Wilkie Collins—the only thing in the correspondence that matters—but obligingly offers to convey to me privately the name of a bank manager in the Strand who really is an "old friend" of his. I do not desire any private correspondence with Mr. Le Queux. His statement that he was an "old friend" of Wilkie Collins has been publicly made. It has been publicly challenged in THE ACADEMY by "N. N." and by the writer of this letter. Cannot Mr. Le Queux see that he now owes it to himself either publicly to substantiate his statement or publicly to withdraw it? Many of us have the pleasure of knowing bank managers in the Strand and elsewhere; few of us enjoyed the privilege of being admitted to the friendship of Wilkie Collins.

O. K.

June 21st, 1909.

THE ETYMOLOGY OF "QUOIT."

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—Mr. Mayhew's strictures (ACADEMY, June 19th) on my note on *quoit* (ACADEMY, June 12th) should have been addressed to the editors of the Supplement to Jamieson. I do not go further than suggesting the identity of S. "cute, a quoit, or curling-stone," with S. "cute, a small coin," an identity which appears to me to be strongly supported by E. *penny-stone*, G. *Plapperstein*, It. *piastrella*, and by the quotations I gave from Shakespeare and Middleton. As for "boldly equating" E.

quoit with Scand. *kvitt*, if Mr. Mayhew will glance through my article again he will see that I only mention the Jamieson etymology without comment.

E. W.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—I have a suggestion to make on this subject, which I beg to submit to the judgment of students of the English language. I think there can be no doubt that *coite*, the oldest form of "quoit" in an English text, is of French origin. I would suggest that *coite* (or *coyt*, the Promptorium form) is identical with a well-known Norman-French *coite*, used by writers of the 12th century in the sense of the rowel of a spur. Moisy has "*Coite*, molette, partie de l'éperon en forme de petite roue, munie de pointes, qui servent à piquer les flancs du cheval." The phrase "*à coite d'esperon*" is of frequent occurrence in Norman texts, as one may see from Moisy's "Glossary," and from Didot's "Appendix to Ducange."

Now, is it not possible, I ask any candid unprejudiced etymologist, that this Norman-French *coite* used in the sense of a rowel may be identical with the Prompt. *coyt*, used in the sense of another "petit objet en forme de roue," a small disc, which was the original shape of the quoit?

But what is the etymology of the Norman word? That's the doubtful point. There occurs in Norman texts the verb *coiter* "aiguillonner, pousser." Is this word (as Moisy holds) a derivative of *coite*, a rowel, or is *coite* a verbal substantive from *coiter*? I think that Moisy is wrong, and that *coite* is derived from *coiter*. The etymology of the verb is quite clear. The etymology of *coite* apart from *coiter* would be a difficult thing to find.

The Norman *coiter* "aiguillonner" appears in the Southern French form *coitar*, and is used in various senses. The Provençal *coitar* means "to hasten, to push on," and also "to torment, to cause sharp pain." It is derived from a Romanic form *coctare* (a derivative of *coctus*, pp. of *coquere*, to cook) "to cause pain, to torment." Compare the well-known use of French *cuire* "causer une douleur âpre et aiguë, Telle qu'est celle que cause une brûlure ou une écorchure"; and the use of *cuisant* "âpre, piquant, aigu: Une douleur cuisante." Now, what can be more "piquant, aigu" than the rowel of a spur?

The conclusion of the matter is that the Norman *coite*, a rowel, may be derived from *coiter*, to cause sharp pain; and that it is possibly identical with the Prompt. *coyt* and our modern word *quoit*.

A. L. MAYHEW.

ENGLISH HISTORY THROUGH AMERICAN GLASSES.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—Your correspondent, Mr. George Stronach, at page 233 implies that Mr. Price Collier, an American writer, is incorrect in giving the year 1649 as the date of Charles II.'s accession to the throne. But, as the legitimate successor of Charles I., Charles II. began to reign from the moment of his father's death on January 30th, 1648 (old style), 1649 (new style). History-tellers who give 1660 as the year of Charles II.'s accession are incorrect unless we are to admit that "worldly men" can "depose the deputy elected by the Lord."

C. S. MILLARD.

June 21st.

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